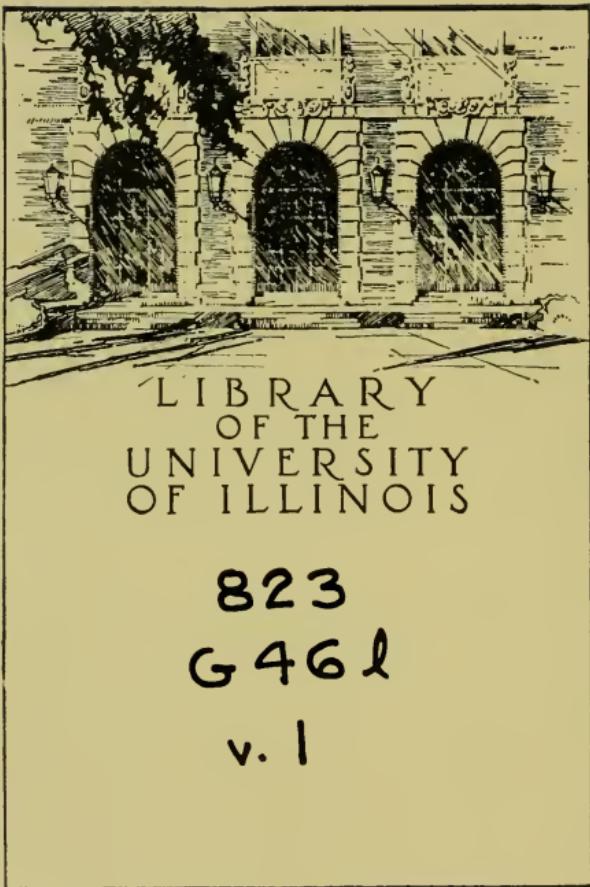




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J. R. Holden







George Cruikshank

L A N D S H A R K S

AND

S E A G U L L S.

BY

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"TALES OF A TAR," &c.

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L A N D S H A R K S

AND

SEA GULLS.

BOOK I.

W I F E - H U N T I N G

“ In the election of a wife, as in
A project of war, to err but once, is
To be undone for ever.”

MIDDLETON

BOOK I.

WIFE-HUNTING.

CHAPTER I.

“ They have devised a mean
How he her chamber-window will ascend,
And with a corded ladder fetch her down.
* * * * You may intercept him.
But, good my lord, do it so cunningly,
That my discovery be not aim’d at.”

Two GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

IN a little pastoral nook on the side of a sharp acclivity, near Teignmouth, in Devonshire, stood, between forty and fifty years ago, and perhaps stands there still, a pleasant mansion, with its miniature park, its well stored grange, and neatly-kept pleasure grounds. This

sequestered spot must have been a paradise during the reign of spring, or amidst the glories of summer, or when the gorgeous plenitude of autumn makes glad the heart of man. But it is necessary now to view Ravenswood (such was the name it had borne more than a century) by the light of a waning moon in a night of winter, namely, in the month of February, 179-.

The house was built in the old fantastic style of Elizabethan architecture. The embayed form of its latticed windows—its irregular front, broken into sundry projections—its little turrets—its many grotesque gables—its ponderous and lofty roof, and its numerous clustering chimney-tops, gave it a quaint and romantic appearance, as it stood on the snow-covered ground in the slant moonshine. The edifice was almost surrounded by a shrubbery of evergreens, which looked as luxuriant and leafy as in a more genial season ; for though there had been a heavy fall of snow in the early part of the night, it had been followed by a breeze

sufficiently strong to dislodge the flakes from the boughs.

But the gusts had ceased for a while, and all around was now in deep silence. The very house, as the poet Wordsworth has said, would have seemed to sleep in the general hush of nature, had not the gleam of a taper been suddenly made manifest in one of the chamber windows.

At the appearance of this light, the figure of a man, muffled in a great coat, and bearing under his arm a slight load, stealthily emerged from the concealment of the shrubbery. As he gazed upwards, the figure of a female wrapped in a fur pelisse was discerned at the window, which being opened, the person below having untied his bundle, threw up a ladder of rope, to be caught above. Unfortunately, however, the unpractised hand of the lady who stood trembling at the open lattice failed to catch it, and it fell to the ground. The attempt was made again and again; but partly owing to the cause just mentioned, and

partly to the uncertain light afforded by the moon, which was ever and anon obscured by clouds as they were driven by sudden and fitful gusts of wind across the welkin, every trial was without success.

“ She ’ll never be able to seize it ! ” soliloquised the person who stood below. “ If I dared speak, I think I could instruct her how to catch the ladder. But all must be done in silence : a word might ruin us. What course *can* I adopt ? ”

He looked about almost in despair. Every moment was precious. While he gazed, the bare branches of a fruit-tree trained against the wall of the house arrested his attention. The tree was evidently of many years’ growth, and had spread its limbs high up the house. Close as these were to the wall, they might afford just sufficient lodgment for his feet, and for the grasp of his hands, to enable him to mount to the lady’s window, and so fix his ladder. This was his only chance ; and accordingly, hooking his arm between the

upper steps of the ladder, so that he might carry it with him, he commenced the ascent.

The plant at first bore his weight well enough, but he had great difficulty in working his hands between the branches and the wall. Still he continued to mount, and had reached at least twenty feet from the ground, when, owing to the constant drag of his hands upon the branches, the tree became loosened from the nails, which had so long confined it to the wall, and began to sway outwards. The situation of the climber at this moment was a most critical one.

The lady at the window had been anxiously looking on the enterprise of her lover (for these poor midnight fugitives had plighted each other their troth), and saw the tree break from its fastenings. In a moment, bending more than half her figure over the sill of the window, and with one hand clutching the frame for self-support, she held out the other for the succour of him in whose safety her own

existence was comprised. Her aid was just in time: an instant more, and the tree, overbalanced, would have precipitated its human load to the ground, and aroused the sleeping inmates of the house. The hand of the young lady was caught in that of her lover: by this means, the tree was again pressed to the wall; the upper step of the rope-ladder was secured above, and the young couple soon safely descended.

“Thus far, all is well, God be praised!” ejaculated the lover. “Your dear hand has saved my life.”

“My hand was vowed to you,” returned the lady. “Could I have withheld it, when you were in danger? Besides, had I not been clumsy ——”

“Nay, nay,” replied Mr. Darcy (for such was the gentleman’s name), “your tender hand could not be equal to what was required of it. But come, dearest, not a moment is to be lost. The post-chaise is as near as it was safe to

bring it to the house. I fear you will have to walk through the snow nearly a quarter of a mile. How inauspiciously the weather has turned out! But, under all circumstances, our meeting could not be postponed."

"I'm not so susceptible of cold, as you imagine," returned Miss Vernon. "The inclemency of the night," she continued, as she and her companion threaded their way through the grounds, surrounding the house, "does not in the least annoy me. It is the malice of my cousin that I fear. Almost every servant in my uncle's house is a spy. Though, up to this point, I have escaped detection, I am not quite certain that my flight has not been *suspected*. Nothing can equal my cousin's cunning and perfidy. His machinations are inscrutable; nor can any consideration turn him aside from his wicked doings, unless indeed it be the terror inspired by your arm."

"I rejoice to think that any thing can restrain him," replied Darcy; "still I shall

never deem we are safe, till we can reach Exeter."

The young couple soon arrived at the place where Darcy had ordered the chaise to await his coming. What was his dismay on finding it was not there! That it had left the inn at Teignmouth, and proceeded towards the appointed spot, he was certain; nay, he had seen it, by the light of the moon, winding its way up the hill. To what cause could its absence be attributed?

"We are betrayed!" exclaimed Miss Vernon: "this is the work of my vile cousin."

"Have you then any reason to suspect that your own maid is aware of your intention?" inquired Darcy.

"No; besides, I have great reliance on her fidelity."

"How then can your cousin suspect anything of our flight?"

"I have already told you that his servants are spies. But the man most to be dreaded is

a London ruffian, who has lately come down here in the employment of my cousin on some secret business."

"After all," observed Darcy, "your fears may be groundless. The driver may have missed the exact spot. Let us look for him."

After searching about, in every possible place to which even the blundering of the post-boy could have conducted the vehicle, Darcy, concluding that some treachery had been perpetrated, had no resource but to proceed with Miss Vernon on foot to Teignmouth. She would have dared any thing, rather than return to Ravenswood.

"We are two miles from Teignmouth," said Darcy. "My heart bleeds to think you must walk thither, bitter and dismal as the night is. The snow on the ground may distress your feet, and perplex our path, but still I feel confident that I can guide you in safety."

The young couple pursued their way over the snow-covered uplands, guided by the position of the trees, of which precise observations

had been previously taken by Darcy. As they journeyed along, the snow began again to fall; the petrifying north wind blew bleakly across the hill; the night was wild and dreary, and nothing but the strength of love could have sustained the fugitives in such a desolate hour.

At length they began to descend the slope leading to Teignmouth. Miss Vernon was almost lifeless with cold and fatigue at that savage hour; but her companion, supporting her upon his arm, cheered her with affectionate words, and in a short time they entered the outskirts of the town. The inn at which the post-chaise had been ordered was soon reached; but the house, contrary to Darcy's expectation, seemed to be hermetically sealed. Some one, he imagined, would be sitting up to receive him, and account for the disappearance of the chaise. But all was quiet as the grave.

Irritated at this, no less than at his previous disappointment, Darcy knocked loudly at the door of the house; and in a minute or two, a

window-sash was lifted up, the head of a man protruded, and the business of the visitor demanded.

“Why, surely,” replied Darcy, “you know well enough who I am. The chaise—where is it? Come down immediately.”

“The chaise!” echoed the man: “why, have n’t you seen it, sir? It was sent according to order,—and left the yard at the appointed time.”

“Appointed *time*! It was not to be found at the appointed *place*. Let me in without delay; a lady is with me.”

The landlord soon appeared, and admitted the fugitives.

“Bad business this, sir. If the man has made a blunder, he ’ll be back here again soon. Pray walk in, sir. I ’ll rouse my missus up: she ’ll soon light a fire, and get somut warm for the young lady. Bless us! what a night!”

“Do not let us wait here,” whispered Miss Vernon to Darcy. “This man knows the

family at Ravenswood, and therefore can hardly fail to recognise me."

"Have you no other chaise at hand, landlord?" Darcy inquired.

"No, sir."

"We have no choice," said Darcy to Miss Vernon; "but must summon our utmost patience, and wait. Landlord," he continued, "had you not better send some one up the hill to look for the chaise?"

"Certainly, sir. I've a stable-boy, who knows the road to Ravenswood well. He sleeps in the loft: I can soon rouse him up."

"Do n't waken him," interrupted Miss Vernon, looking significantly at Darcy.

"Why not, ma'am?" said the landlord. "They call poor Limping Ben a simpleton, but I can trust him on such an errand as this. Was n't the chaise to wait near Ravenswood, sir?"

"Yes," returned Darcy. Then turning to Miss Vernon, he said aside, "I understood the purport of your look; but, as the landlord says

the boy is only half-witted, nothing is to be feared from him."

"Well, well, it must be so, I suppose," replied Miss Vernon; "but I can place no reliance in the faith of any one about here."

"My life on the landlord's sincerity," rejoined Darcy; "I never was deceived in the looks of any man, and our host bears an honest countenance."

Boniface was not long in producing the boy, who entered the room with his master, gaping, rubbing his eyes, and looking with a vacant expression, as if he was neither awake nor asleep.

"Come, drowsy," said the landlord, "rouse yourself. The gentleman here wants you to go up along the road to Ravenswood, and look out for Sam and the chaise as went that way according to order."

The lad, staring hard at Miss Vernon, said, "Be I to bring the chaise back down along?"

"Yes, sure," replied the landlord. "What

are you staring at? Stir your stumps, and be off."

"And here, my lad," said Mr. Darcy, "is a crown to help you along."

The boy eagerly clutched the coin. The taste of money is like the taste of blood: it begets a longing for more. Limping Ben was in reality a simpleton; but like all West-country louts, he had an eye to his own interest. Miss Vernon's features were not unfamiliar to him: he had often seen her in the grounds of Ravenswood; and not being able to account for her appearance at his master's house at so late an hour, his mind, stupid as it was, conceived that a little information to the squire at Ravenswood might add a guinea to the gentleman's crown.

"Fasten up your house, landlord," said Darcy, "and bring us something in the way of refreshment. I believe you to be no party to the knavery practised on me. In this young lady and myself, you see two most persecuted individuals."

The landlady, by this time, had made her appearance.

“Lord love ‘ee, Miss, do ‘ee take a drop of some ‘ut to comfort ‘ee. The cold to-night be enough to chill ‘ee to death. Let me make ‘ee a nice glass of white wine negus.” Repairing to the bar for this purpose, she whispered to her husband, “one ought to help the likes o’ they; a handsomer couple I never zee. ’Twould be a thouzand pities to let the volks at Ravenswood cross their bent.”

“They shan’t, if I can help it,” rejoined her husband. “I’ll match ‘em now. I never see a penny o’ their money. The old squire, and the young ‘un too, always goes to the Crown. Let ‘em go there now. Be danged to ‘em.”

In about an hour and a half “Limping Ben” returned, saying, “There baint no zign o’ the chay to be zeed.” The boy, manifesting great reluctance to be questioned, slunk off abruptly to his bed in the loft.

He had not long disappeared before the missing vehicle drove into the yard; and the

post-boy being summoned to the parlour to explain what he had been about, declared that he had driven the couple to Exeter, according to order.

“Why, how can that be?” asked the landlord; “they are now here waiting for you.”

“All I can zay, zur,” said the post-boy, perfectly puzzled, “is, that as I was waiting where I was told, at the top o’ the hill leadin’ down along to Ravenswood, a muffled-up chap comes up to the horse’s head, and zays—‘baint you,’ zays he, ‘come up on zummut of a-run-away zort o’ a job?’ ‘I raither thinks I am,’ zays I. ‘All right,’ zays he; ‘open the door. The young lady’s a-waiting at Teignmouth. Bowl away,’ zays he. Off I dashes—takes him to the zkirt o’ the town—out my gentlemen lights, and in about o’ quarter of an hour returns, lugging along a young ’ooman, and forces her into the chay—for the poor thing was trembling like a leaf—and seemed timmerzum, and loath to get in. But you know, master, it baint

the bisness of a post-boy to meddle in *them* matters."

"What sort of people were they?" inquired Darcy, more than ever mystified.

"Why, zur, when I comed to zee more o' the man in the hall o' the White Hart at Exeter, I *did* think he didn't look quite the thing. He zeemed a shabby-genteel zort o' chap, zummet like a Lunnun zharper: but, then, zays I to myself, mayhap the dress be only to carry on the decoy. The young 'ooman tried all she could to hide her vace with her bonnet; but I once catches a glimpse of her, and I'm danged if I don't think she baint no other nor one of old Mother Lazarus's daughters, az keeps the zlop-zhop in High Ztreeet. Howsomever, we was n't many minutes at the White Hart at Exeter, afore they mounts on the top of the Tallyho, just as the coach was ztarting off for Lunnun."

"Did the man offer to pay for the chaise?" inquired the landlord.

“No, zure. He zaid 'twas all zettled ; and you, master, zaid the zame.”

“We're bamboozled, reg'larly bit !” exclaimed the landlord. “Never mind, sir ; luckily I've a pair of fresh horses in the stable, and they shall instantly be put to. Sam, you can take the chaise on to Exeter ?”

“What, directly, master ? It's raither tightish work.”

“Do your best, my lad,” interposed Darcy. “I'll reward you well for any extra exertion.”

The horses were now put to. The post-boy refreshed himself with a glass of hot liquor, and all was ready.

“The chaise is at the door, sir,” announced the landlord, returning to the parlour.

“Come, dearest,” said Darcy, addressing Miss Vernon ; “our misery will soon be at an end. Come.”

As they were leaving the room, a gentleman, followed by a groom, suddenly came up.

The former, assuming an air of command over Miss Vernon, expressed a determination to convey her back to her uncle's house.

“By what right, sir,” asked Mr. Darcy, “do you presume to follow me, and attempt to coerce this lady?”

“By the right which a relative possesses over her.”

A contemptuous smile curled Darcy's lip.

“The young lady,” said he, “disclaims you, with scorn: she is of age, and her own mistress. You have not a shadow of authority over her, and I will punish the slightest attempt to exercise it.”

“Your talk is large enough,” rejoined the intruder, “whatever your possessions may be. But you must suffer me to know best what is due both to this lady and to her family. She shall not elope with an Irish pauper.”

Darcy's wrath was now kindled. Had not the lady been present, a blow would speedily have avenged the insult. As it was, he contented himself with promptly ejecting

from the room his insolent defamer, whom he followed into the passage.

A scuffle now ensued. Both master and man flew on Darcy. This was too much for the landlord's sense of fair play.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Boniface, "two upon one is agen all manner o' rule. It shall never be said that I stood by and see it. No, no—dang it, that 'ill never do;" and laying a rough grasp upon the groom, he drew him off, leaving Darcy to dispose of the other.

During the whole fracas, the post-boy remained mounted. Seeing this, Darcy called aloud to Miss Vernon to enter the chaise, which she immediately did without molestation; Boniface keeping firm hold of the groom, and Darcy depriving the gentleman of the power of motion.

As soon as the lady was seated, her lover threw off his antagonist, sprung to her side, closed the door of the vehicle, and the post-boy, clapping spurs to his horse, drove off at a rapid rate.

“Curses on him!” ejaculated the intruder. “But I’ll not be thus foiled! I’ll pursue him through the earth. It is in my power to blast his name, if not drag him to the scaffold. O, that I could have secured *her* from his power! And so I should have done, had Bobson been with me, according to promise. That scoundrel’s absence has ruined all. He thinks more of his own than of *my* affairs; otherwise I should not have been indebted to that lame simpleton for my knowledge of what was going on to-night. Where are the horses, Robert?”

“Under the outer shed, sir,” answered the groom.

“Quick! Let us mount, and pursue the run-aways. We shall overtake the chaise in a few minutes. I won’t lose sight of them again,” said he to himself. “A magistrate’s warrant may stop the operations of Mother Church, and then, my dainty cousin, once more for Ravenswood.”

The fugitives in the chaise were beginning to congratulate each other on their present

exemption from danger, when the rapid tramp of horses feet broke suddenly on their ear.

“We are pursued!” exclaimed Miss Vernon.

“It matters not,” returned Darcy. “You can defy your cousin’s utmost malice.”

“Alas! you do not know him, as I do.”

“Hark!” exclaimed Darcy: “one of the horses has stumbled. I heard the fall. They have stopped.”

The sounds of pursuit were no longer heard. The hoof of the horse ridden by Miss Vernon’s pursuer, having become what is technically termed “balled” by the snow, the animal, being at full trot, made a false step, fell on his knees, and threw his rider over his head.

Reining up, the groom soon dismounted, and flew to the assistance of his master, whom he found senseless from the fall.

Mr. Darcy and Miss Vernon reached Exeter in little time; were married on the following morning by special licence, and without the least delay posted on to London.

CHAPTER II.

“ Amidst this tumult of fish, flesh, and fowl,
And vegetables all in masquerade,
The guests were placed according to their roll,
But various as the various meats display’d.”

BYRON.

ABOUT the time occupied by the foregoing incidents, there lived in London a man learned in the law though very *unlearned* in other matters. He was every inch of him what is called “*a character*,” and, inasmuch as he was in no slight degree influential in bringing about many of the events in the present history, it will be necessary at once to introduce him to the reader.

Walter Waddy was the son of a very worthy

personage, who, for forty years, had rejoiced in the interesting and profitable calling of sheriff's officer in the county of Middlesex. Fortune had long favoured this well-known "Son of Agrippa." He was lord of his own "Lock up"—was "blest," as he was wont to phrase it, "with the best business in Lunnun—had always an ousefull"—a constant succession of customers—and ultimately was enabled to "put by a bit o' money," and to foster certain parental hopes which had been encouraged by his bitter half; who, if the truth must be told, was prouder of her boy than of her spouse. Mrs. Waddy saw in her hopeful scion, especially when he returned home in the holidays laden with the knowledge inculcated in the suburban "establishments for young gentlemen," a spirit congenial with the family from which she had herself sprung, and she had been known more than once to throw out sundry pathetic lamentations that children did not take the family name of the mother, rather than that of the father: "Watty," she often thought to herself,

“was worthy of being a Gubbins in name, because he was a Gubbins in nature.”

“Mr. Waddy the Hoffer,” as his professional friends dubbed him, had long entertained his own views in regard to his son. Walter, in his opinion, was born to do honour to the euphonious name of Waddy. In the pertness and cunning, which the father dignified by the names of spirit and intelligence, of the youth, the “Hoffer” recognised a true descendant of his own line; he wondered, indeed, how it had come to pass, that the genuine Waddy blood had not been polluted by admixture with the Gubbinses; but its predominance was only another proof of the commanding nature of the blood of the Waddies. Be this as it may, the “Hoffer” had long indulged in the flattering and ambitious belief, that Walter was destined to take a conspicuous lead “in the upper *walks* of the law.” In short, the bailiff’s son was booked for the bar.

It would be a tedious and uninteresting task to detail the initiatory course undergone by

Mr. Walter Waddy, preparatory to the “said Walter” being called to the British bar :—suffice it to say, he had been schooled, flogged, “fagged,” and boarded at Wimbledon—cut, on his father’s account, by the Fellow Commoners at Cambridge,—had “kept his terms” at the Temple, though on terms with none of the students,—“ate his dinners,”—devoured “Coke upon Lyttleton,”—digested the several “Digests” of the day,—pored over the Statutes of the State,—practised “draughting” deeds, settlements, and separations,—taken lessons in elocution from a popular tragedian,—shut himself up in chambers,—shunned society,—studied everything but “men and manners,” and neglected the common courtesies received and exchanged in civilised life. In short, when the counsellor was called to the bar, and had commenced the Northern Circuit, he was not only the most morose of men, but the most insufferable ; being licensed to brow-beat man, pervert truth, and insult sense, under shelter of the gown, or “wisdom of the wig.” In vul-

gar parlance, he had not “a good word for a dog,” unless that dog could “scent a solicitor,” “point to a retainer,” or “bag a brief.”

Time, however, rolled on ; and, if Mr. Walter Waddy wasted not time, time wasted Mr. Walter Waddy ; for at thirty-five, his fifth year of legal life, he wore the aspect of a man who had fallen into the vale of years. His forehead was furrowed, the lines of his face deeply indented ; his complexion, which was naturally sallow, became the more dark and discoloured by the constant insertion of snuff into the gaping nostrils of a nose turned up at an angle of fifteen degrees from the facial line—an organ always inclined to be *above* its business—giving itself airs in the air — “playing before high heaven” the most fantastic tricks, and for ever cutting the most lofty, ludicrous, and novel of nasal capers.

His eyes, when one could sufficiently fix them to discern their colour, were of hazel hue, but unfortunately they were restless in their sockets, perpetually in motion, and perpetu-

ally, like the Portuguese troops on both banks of the Douro, keeping up a constant and useless “cross-fire” in an undue direction. In plain English, his obliquity of vision was awfully fierce. His teeth, by some unaccountable frolic of nature, were beautifully white, well set, and harmonised admirably with their snuff-coloured curtains; and upon every occasion, whether of mastication or altercation, were sure to be shewn. In his hair he wore powder, and sported a “queue,” which, like the “tail” of the present day, sliding into snug situations, was perpetually, despite of the efforts of the head, twisting and thrusting itself between the back of the barrister and collar of his coat.

His customary attire consisted of a black, thread-bare coat, crusted not a little on the collar with a plentiful allowance of pomatum and powder. A white stock, narrowly plaited, enfolded his thin neck. “Short tights” of black kerseymere, and “long continuations” of polished leather, encased his “nether limbs;” and, when in “walking trim,” or “off for the

Courts," a broad-brimmed beaver, with a band of unusual breadth, covered his powdered head, while from his right-hand dangled a coarse mo-reen blue-coloured bag, which, when briefs were scarce, contained anything but legal or *legitimate* contents.

The person, gait, and gaiters of the "said" Waddy were not calculated, as the reader may readily imagine, to ensure him a favourable or flattering reception from the "softer sex." Indeed, when proceeding on foot from the "Temple" to the courts, and *vice versa*, his ears were constantly assailed by remarks from female lips, which were by no means likely to add to his self-complacency. But the wily widow of the "hoffer" was still in being. Former associations haunted her mind, and such were her predilections for bonds and bondage, that she determined, by a nuptial knot, to fetter the fate of her "bachelor boy." In fact, the mother had resolved to settle her son—"to see him married, and married well, to some wealthy widow."

But in the attainment of this object there were obstacles to contend with, which poor Mrs. Waddy well knew ; for the bailiff's relict was fully aware, that the widows of wealthy men were not to be found in "chambers," or picked up *en route* from Fleet Street to Westminster Hall.

"As a woman," as she was wont to argue with her son—"as a woman as knowed somet of the ways of the world, and all the little ins and outs of life, there was never nothing to be done by remaining single. What would the counsellor's father have done had *he* led a single life? How would the tap have told, and what would *he* have done without a wife to comfort his customers and to carry on the in-door business when business took him on his *walks* without?"

Although in her first efforts the pleadings of the parent had failed in effect, and the filial "rejoinders put in" had produced "an arrest of judgment," still the counsellor was not so bigoted in favour of "single blessed-

ness," as to forego a favourable chance of falling on a double dowry.

The barrister at length yielding to maternal counsel thought to bestir himself; and now commenced, as he termed it, "a regular routine of raking life"—namely, dining at his *own* expense, two Sundays in the month, at a boarding house in the parish of Bloomsbury.

At this celebrated asylum for single and singular folk, there happened to dwell a widow of comfortable capacity. In her own person there were elements sufficient for the formation of a tolerable tea party. The widow of weight was also a widow of wealth. Her dear deceased, formerly a rich sugar baker in Bristol, having, to keep her from pining, bequeathed to her the entire of his funded property.

The first opportunity afforded to the barrister to "bring his optics to bear" upon the "*Lady of the Lump*," as designated by her sourer associates, happened to be on the second occasion of accepting his own invitation to dine at the above-mentioned establishment.

When the company, which consisted of seventeen persons,—“ persons of every degree,”—had descended to the dining-room, Waddy waited until the widow with the wherewithal had taken her seat; when, to further his purpose, he instantly, as sailors say, “brought his person to an anchor abreast of his bird.” This position had been purposely sought, to provoke, if possible, an ocular discourse; for it must be borne in mind that, although Waddy was a Templar and tenant of the Temple, he

— “had not those soft parts of conversation
That *chamberers* have.”

Moreover, in his opinion, the language of the eyes was more expressive and telling than the “*tender tongue*”; and therefore, to employ a vulgar but expressive phrase, soup had hardly been served, ere “sheep’s eyes” (wolves’ eyes had been nearer the mark) went to work with energetic force; but as usual with Waddy, the “*cast*” had crossed the intent, and foiled the fire.

“ Counsellor Waddy,” said a gruff, grey-headed, vulgar-looking, superannuated button-maker from Birmingham, who sat on the right of the lady president—the head of the house—“ Counsellor, will you jine Mistress Martin and me in a glass of wine? carving, you see, sir, ’s warm work for the lady.”

To all other eyes, save those of the lawyer, intent on warmer work, the remark was superfluous. The heated condition of the carver afforded the proof personal, as well as the proof positive. Mrs. Martin never permitted her “ joints,” her “ edge-bones,” and particularly her “ rounds” and her “ sir-loins,” to be touched by other hands than her own.

The button-maker’s invitation was repeated ; for, unlike his eyes, the ears of the lawyer were not “ on the *cock*.”

“ I do n’t care if I do, sir,” returned Waddy, catching the sound of the second invitation, and filling his glass from the *labelled* bottle which lay upon his left.

“ Thomas,” cried the lawyer’s next neigh-

bour—"part owner" of the labelled bottle from which Waddy had helped himself in his utter ignorance of the principles upon which domestic economy was conducted under Mrs. Martin's roof—"Thomas,—remove *that* bottle to the side-board until called for."

The domestic obeyed the mandate. As Waddy was the "lion" of the table, a second invitation to "take wine" soon followed the first.

Here Thomas was seen to whisper Waddy, who in reply ejaculated aloud,

"Be it so—place one here, and another bottle before the lady opposite—the *stout* lady."

"Oh! dear, sir," returned the widow, "I never indulge in wine."

"Glad to hear it, ma'am,—live all the longer for it."

And these were the only words which during dinner, Waddy had interchanged with the "stout lady."

The "table talk," after the ladies had retired

to the drawing-room, was chiefly confined to critical discussions upon port-wine, players, and petticoats. One party had contended that, to his palate, port-wine partook of a better flavor the *second* day than the first, when allowed to remain in the bottle. Another, that the “Richard” of Kemble was perfect farce compared with the “Richard” of Cooke;—and another, after descanting upon the merits of the widow, came to the generous conclusion that “short petticoats seldom betokened purity of purpose.” But in all these discussions, Waddy remained doggedly and sullenly mute.

The lawyer had already left the gentlemen to “join the ladies aloft.” Upon entering the drawing-room in a cogitating mood, he again planted himself opposite to the widow, who occupied no small portion of the sofa allotted to the ladies,—for in this superexcellent establishment, domestic matters were managed upon the singular system of *separation*—separate “pegs” were assigned in the hall, for the

“gentlemen’s hats”—separate “pins” for the “ladies’ cloaks.”—The ladies in the drawing-room had their separate sofas, and the gentlemen in the parlour their separate bottles. In short, to enumerate the sundry articles of “separation,” and separate et-ceteras, contained in Mrs. Martin’s catalogue of “separate uses” would occupy a separate Chapter, which a *Robins* alone could attempt to write.

The last of the parlour-party had not long returned to the ladies ere a middle-aged German gentleman entered the room, a ci-devant acquaintance of the lady’s late husband.

It was the foreigner’s first appearance in the character of guest to the widow of his former friend. After making his obeisance to each and all seated in the vicinity of the hissing urn, he approached the portly person of the fair widow, to render her that little light-hearted though not inelegant homage, which invariably our continental neighbours offer to their female acquaintances when joining or departing their

presence : her hand was yielded with the smiling good temper which marked all her actions, and the German elevated it to his lips.

This salute was not lost upon the lawyer, who viewing it, as he did every thing else, in a false light, rose indignantly from his seat, and instantly departed the room—muttering to himself as he descended the drawing-room stairs, “d——d unwarrantable piece of impertinence ! ”

CHAPTER III.

“A villainous trick of thine eye.”

HENRY IV.

“She thought upon the subject twice or thrice,
And morally decided, the best state is
For morals, marriage ; and this question carried,
She seriously advised him to get married.”

BYRON.

WADDY had now reached the Temple. His walk and walking reflections had contributed little to cool his warmth or allay his wrath.

“That woman,” said he, throwing his hat upon the table, and closing the door of his inner apartment, “that woman, by Heavens, must be blind! No man could have made stronger or more striking advances than I did

this day at dinner. My eyes were fairly riveted on hers. If ever eyes told the intentions of man, mine were as plainly and intelligibly told to that widow woman as tongue could tell. She's positively a puzzle. Can't understand her at all. She either affects shyness, or is decidedly the slowest of her sex ; and yet, she has a fine face—eyes that flash like lightning. And sometimes, too, she looks such a feather-bed, laughing lump of unsophisticated feminality, that I'm quite at a loss to divine her drift. But perhaps my mother, who searches the human heart like calomel the liver, may throw a little light upon the widow's ways."

Waddy was little of a physiognomist. Nor were his deductions touching the widow's disinclination to respond to his ocular signs well founded. The gentleman, in his soliloquy, was not only reasoning from false premises, but also had arrived at conclusions which involved alike a libel on the lady and a libel on his own looks. Had his vanity permitted him to de-

pend less upon his own impressions, or, indeed, had he even called to his recollection certain rhetorical rules (to say nothing of logic), he would soon have seen, that the construction he had put upon the lady's slights had come under that “clause” which adepts in the art, and students of style denominate the “*squinting construction*.”* His eyes during dinner had never once lit upon those of the widow; on the contrary, they had been caught by those of a Tartar, seated two removes on the left of the intended object, and who, in her own defence, had been com-

* “The squinting construction,” says Campbell, in his *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, “is, when a clause is so situated in a sentence that we are at a loss to ascertain whether it be connected with the words which precede or follow it, thus: ‘As it is necessary to have the head clear as well as the complexion, to be perfect in this part of learning, I rarely mix with the men, but frequent the tables of the ladies.’ Whether to be perfect,” adds Campbell, “in this part of learning, is it necessary to have the head clear as well as the complexion—or, to be perfect in this part of learning, does he rarely mingle with the men, but frequent the tea tables of the ladies? Whichever of these be the sense, the words ought to have been otherwise arranged.”

elled to resort to the most significant of facial signs, in return to the gentleman's unceasing and tormenting "telegraph."

In fact, the "false flashes" of the lawyer were felt by the spare spinster on the widow's left to be indecently offensive, and were answered in a manner which appeared to more than one tittering observer, as if "the lady in the pink poplin" had been mocking the barrister's nasal tricks. Every wink and blink intended for the eye of the fat fair was met by the most contemptuous and indignant cock of the nose of the leaner lady. This shews that our naval forefathers "had their eyes about them," when they caused to be inserted in the **GENERAL CODE** of Sea-Signals that significant purport—

"Signal seen, but not understood."

And so it was in this instance. The telegraphic features of each party had been playing at cross purposes. On one side, a store of virtuous indignation had been vented in vain,

and on the other, the grossest of unlicensed looks was as vainly and as extravagantly expended.

Waddy now consulted his experienced mother, who, according to the summons of the son, appeared at chambers early on the following day.

The case was soon opened, and discussed. In "summing up" the mother came to the encouraging conclusion, that the widow's coyness was not coolness—that, on the contrary, it looked well; for she well knew, that the more distant widows were at first, the sooner they meant matters to come to a close.

Unpractised in the wiles of woman, this confession from one versed so well in all the mysterious contradictions and paradoxical passions inherent in her sex, was in itself sufficient to determine the lawyer to press his suit.

"To-morrow, mother, or the day after at farthest," said Waddy, "decides the matter."

"*To-morrow!* Watty:—why such haste?"

“Can’t help it, mother—time presses, and in these, as well as other matters, time should be taken by the forelock.”

“Forelock! Lord love you—you’re not in the *lock-up* now. Recollect, Watty, women must be timed, like other things—and particularly widows with the wherewithal. Widows, of all women, like their little courtships. Now there was your poor dear father: *I* was a young widow when he courted me—but *I* was not to be won in a week, and he saw that—and saw it soon.”

“Did he indeed?”

“He did, indeed!”

“Well, mother, I had often heard that foresight was my father’s forte.”

“I don’t know what you call your father’s forte,” returned the loquacious dame, glancing at her son one of her penetrating looks; “but I know this, *no* man ever tickled the ear of woman with a nicer set of soft sayings.”

“Hem!” said Waddy, aside.

“And then,” continued the old woman,

“ he had *such* insinuating tender ways.—If I only scratched my finger with a pin’s point, there was fly out of the house for a slip of court plaister.”

“ And yet, mother, he was not much of a *court* plaisterer.”

“ Yes, but Watty—as poor Mrs. Warner used to say—he was very delicate in his little attentions—he had always some little present to offer, or some little token to shew that I never was out of his mind.”

“ Well, my dear mother,” interrupted Waddy, “ there ’s no use in wasting words: you must be well aware that my father’s pursuits, tastes, and inclinations ever ran counter to mine.”

“ How *can* you say so, Watty? Look at me straight in the face—why, you ’re the very model of the old gentleman. There ’s the same roguish eye—the same insinuating slant that won your mother’s heart—ay, your mother’s heart, you dog.”

“ I hope, mother, you don’t mean to insi-

nuate," said Waddy, who, singular to say, was ever unconscious of his own obliquity of vision —"I hope you do n't mean to insinuate that *I* inherit his hated squint?"

"Squint!—why, Lord love you, Watty, have you already forgotten your father's face?"

"'Twas my lot to see it seldom," said Waddy, assuming a serious tone.

"And well for Watty 't was so," returned the argumentative mother.—"If others could have said the same, Watty would n't be what he *now* is.—No, no, your father knew what was what—and, more, he knew how to carry on a courtship; and if his son would only follow *his* winning ways—take his time, and time things—he 'd win the widow with all her wealth."

"Mother," said Waddy, with marked emphasis—"Mother, a man who is all day long in the courts has little time to be courting at night. Moreover, I hold courting to be the most tedious and unprofitable waste of a lawyer's leisure. Winning wealth is all very

well in its way; but, to *me*, wooing woman is the very devil!" accompanying the delivery of the satanic title with a thump of the table that fairly astounded his aged auditor. "And as for soft sayings, as you term them—what are they? the mere mumblings of a world of wordy nothings. And what are your *tender* doings? —what, but affecting, in nine cases out of ten, to feel for an unfeeling lump of affectation. And, if your *delicate* attentions consist in having presents returned on your hands, with the hand rejected, why then, the devil take all such delicate attentions, say I.—So now, mother, I hope you'll allow me to follow my own course."

And here the barrister took his hat, and left his astounded mother to ponder on her son's unaccountable disinclination to courtship.

CHAPTER IV.

“ All 's not offence that indiscretion finds.”

KING LEAR.

“ A mighty pretty quarrel as it stands.”

THE RIVALS.

HAD Waddy been the son of a naval officer instead of the son of a sheriff's officer, he would have known what it was to aspire to the title, or rather “*rating*,” of a WIDOW'S MAN*. He would have known, too, that coarse innuendo, vain vapouring, and petulant impatience would never obtain for the candi-

* The uninitiated will do well to refer to their naval friends for the definition of this “*rating*.”

date the enviable rating on the books of a wealthy weeper. Not that Mrs. Hunter (for that was the name of the sugar-baker's widow) ever indulged in the "melting-mood." A merrier soul never mourned mate,—survived grief, nor fattened upon fun.

Although little calculated to grace a court, figure in a curricle, or shine as the fantastic and frivolous votary of fashion, still the "Lady of the Lump" was not deficient in the vulgar and valuable attribute of "common sense."—No woman set a truer estimate upon her own charms; no woman sooner detected the sinister designs of selfish men, or more delighted to indulge in the innocent mirth of bantering the mercenary admirer.

Waddy had already found that it was not so easy to "hurry matters with the widow." Since his vaunted declaration to his mother, twice had he sought and obtained of Mrs. Hunter a private "*hearing*;" but upon each occasion "exceptions were taken," which had not a little tended to cool his courage.—Indeed,

at his last interview, his effrontery fairly forsook him. In the *tête-à-tête*, the “slowest of her sex” seemed to be the quicker of the two. In short, the good-humoured raillery of the laughing widow took the barrister completely aback.

“What!” she exclaimed,—“a gentleman learned in the law,—a man of mind—of education—of courtly manners and fashionable mien, throw himself away upon the widow of a vulgar sugar-baker?—No, no; a barrister like Mr. Waddy, who in all probability is destined to become the Lord High Chancellor of England, should select his spouse from the ladies of the land.”

And in this way had the barrister to contend with the widow’s banter, and ultimately to retreat and depart her presence, ignorant as to whether he was to consider himself “on or off,” a rejected or an encouraged suitor.

But the fact must not be concealed. Another individual had been counselled to lay siege to the widow’s heart. The “party,” as

they say in the city, who had been advised to win her affections and way-lay her wealth, bore the patronymic of O'Finn.

Mr. Phelan Fitzgerald O'Finn had for some months filled the office of *cashless* cashier to the tottering firm of "Nares, Nathan, and Co." Navy Prize Agents to the unwitted and well-robbed warrant-officers of his Majesty's Navy. Like the poorer portion of his countrymen, O'Finn was excessively proud of his rich (*unknown*) relations, and particularly of the great *O* in his name.

By blood, O'Finn was nearly allied to the attenuated female whose "telegraphic" features (as the reader is already aware) had so signally failed in their intended effect; like her cousin,—her "cousin *Garman* on her mother's side,"—the spare spinster sprang from a race once "rich and rare," but, unfortunately, now rarely rich! Miss or Mrs. Elizabeth Moore (according to the mood, courteous or unkind, of those disposed to address her,) possessed in an eminent degree a tact peculiarly felicitous

in sounding the sentiments of others, or, to adopt the present fashionable political phrase, "putting forth feelers" upon topics involving delicate doubts.

The brevet "Mrs. M." or rather the "brevet beauty" (for, like many of the older "old women" of the opposite sex, doomed to be derided for wearing unwon honours, Miss Moore had had bestowed on her a title to which she could lay but little claim,) was entitled to the merit of being peculiarly happy in the timing of her "sudden thoughts,"—dropping her "unpremeditated hints,"—disclosing her "private opinions and private suspicions upon *certain* subjects,"—detecting suppressed sighs, —accounting for dejected looks; and, in short, exciting in others the strongest desire to indulge discussion upon topics of a tender and secret nature.

Possessing such tact and talents, it was not likely that when a favourable opportunity was afforded to her to call them into play, the "brevet beauty" would long allow them

to remain idle. Indeed, Mrs. Hunter had hardly given to Mrs. Martin's system of "*separation*" a month's trial, ere the new-comer and the old stager had become the most inseparable of fond friends,—a friendship which, on the part of the Munster maiden, was soon followed by a "*feeler*" in favour of her cousin Phelan.

On a less equivocal occasion, she went so far as to assert that *she* "*could see a match fraught with mutual advantage and benefit to both, if, indeed, the parties could only be brought to think so, and were not blind to their own interests* ; for, though on one side there might be some little disparagement in the way of wealth, yet, on the other, there was a far *greater* deficiency ; for, after all, what was wealth in this world, if a body hadn't *name* to give it weight?"

But, singular to say, whenever the same subject was brought before the nicer notice of O'Finn, the gentleman affected indifference, talked largely of "*personal sacrifices*," and suspected motives.

“ Sure,” said he, upon the first formal discussion of his cousin’s delicate hint,—“ sure you wou’dn’t have an O’Finn called an Irish fortune-hunter; none of the name could endure the thought.”

“ Your attentions to Mrs. H.” returned the speculating spinster, “ have been too distant—far too distant, Phelan—to merit a designation so undue; on that score, indeed, Phelan, you’ve nothing to fear.”

“ Faith, I don’t think, any how, there’s much fear of refusal; the fear’s all the other way,” said O’Finn, affecting a coxcombical air.

“ Don’t be too sure of that; Mrs. Hunter is by no means an everyday woman. To win her, a man must play a delicate card.”

“ Oh ! she’s a delicate cratur entirely; faith, she’d brake a body in coach springs, if she even brought the wherewithal to keep the same.”

“ Oh, indeed ! for that matter, Phelan, all must admit she has manes sufficient; though,

to be sure, she has the greatest aversion to show."

"Show! she's show enough in herself."

"'Deed,—indeed, Phelan, I can't agree with you a'tall a'tall. She's a little larger, perhaps, than suits the tastes of some; but, how finely formed her fatures are; and then take her timper, isn't it buteeful? Had she but the blood of the Moores in her veins, 'faith, in my mind, she'd be famale perfection."

In this manner, for several weeks, were discussed the means and merits and personal qualifications of the sugar-baker's widow.

A long-dreaded intimation, however, had now been officially made to Mr. Phelan O'Finn: the "fates," or rather the "firm," had decreed that, in reality, the modest Milesian was soon to become the "*retiring* gentleman;" in other words, the useless office he then held was to be dispensed with, and that immediately. Upon the receipt of this notice, O'Finn, as a matter of course, consulted with his "clever cousin,"—who, after manifesting

considerable concern for his loss of place, and urging him strongly to devote to the widow his undivided attentions,—had to communicate “a circumstance, which, as an Irish lady, she never could permit to pass unnoticed,—indeed, she should have said, passed unpunished!”

The emphatic delivery of the fair advocate’s disinterested advice, had already excited the earnest attention of O’Finn; but the mystery involved in her allusion to the undisclosed “circumstance,” and particularly the vindictive tone in which she had uttered the word “unpunished,” aroused in him feelings not to be mistaken. The blast of war was blown.

“ Quick, Bess—quick! Tell me what d’ye mane? Has any one dared to offer you of-fince?”

“ No famale,” returned the excited fair, enriching her broad Munster brogue by the accents of deep indignation — “ no famale could have receaved grater or grosser insult.”

“There it is, Bess—how often have I warned you never to walk out alone !”

“Ah sure ! Phelan, it was n’t in the streets a’tall a’tall. Is n’t it more than a month since I put on as much as a bonnet ?”

“Oh ! I see it now. Faith, Bess, my blood was beginning to be on the bile,” said O’Finn, softening in tone, and bridling in his too readily aroused ire—“but sarvants, you see, in these sort of houses, are sometimes mighty saucy—mighty saucy, indeed.”

“ ’Twas no servant that insulted me. No servant would have *dard* to take such unwarrantable and unbecoming liberties.”

“ *Liberties ! liberties ! Bess,*” reiterated O’Finn, accompanying his words by a searching stare, which went to penetrate her very thoughts. “Is it me,” he added, after a pensive pause, “is it Phelan that desarves to be kept in this suspense ? Do I desarve it, Bess ? —Bess, you mane something ! There’s scorn in your eye,—but why scorn to disclose that maning to me ?”

Like the gusty gale lulled and allayed by heavy rain, the boisterous rant was succeeded by a weeping calm. The elements of wrath yielded to a “tide of tears.”—The room which had already rung with the wild reverberations of brogue and bluster, had now, for a few seconds, become tranquil and silent as the grave. A softer scene ensued. O’Finn stood mute and motionless before his afflicted cousin, bathed in “brine.” The weeping fair had sought her handkerchief—but like that of Othello’s “gift,” it was missing when most wanted.

“Here, Bess,” said O’Finn, perceiving the lady’s double distress, and supplying her weeping necessities—“take mine, and dhry your tears; I’d no notion matters had gone so far.”

“Far, indeed! Ah! Phelan, I now feel I have gone *too* far. To you, above all men, I should not have said *so* much.”

“So much? Why, as yet, you’ve said nothing,” said O’Finn, petulantly.

“ *Too* much, indeed, indeed I have !” returned the sobbing beauty, bathed in tears.

“ Bess, by all that’s brave—and that’s an oath it isn’t for one o’ the *name* to brake—but I’ll never lave the room till you tell me all !”

“ All ! I’ve told you all, already.”

“ No, Bess—you can spake plainer when you plase.”

“ Phelan,” said the weeping prude, in a tone manifestly assumed to mark the unmerited reproach, “ all I *should* have said, I have said—and again replate. In few words—a gentleman, upon whom I had never but once before laid eyes, insulted me at the table, in the grossest possible manner, when it must have been plain to him, that I was *any* thing but the person he desired to think me.”

“ Say no more, Bess—that’s quite enough for me,” said O’Finn, grasping his hat, and rushing to the chamber door.

“ Stop, Phelan—hear me now ! Do, I besach you—a minute more,” cried the agitated and

trembling woman, seizing and holding with a firm grasp the skirts of her cousin's coat.

“ Not another word. No man shall insult a cousin of mine. What! an O'Finn suffer a female to be insulted with impunity ? ”

And extricating himself from the lady's grasp, he fled out of the room; forgetting, in his haste, to acquire the name and address of the offender of “ female innocence.”

At length, after proceeding at a rapid rate nearly the whole extent of Great Russell-street, in search of his “ favourite friend,” he stopped suddenly short, and placing his hand upon his heated forehead, exclaimed, in a loud tone, “ By the powers of pewter, I've neither the fellow's name nor the fellow's address.”

“ What a wild Irishman ! ” observed a passing female, staring the fire-eater full in the face.

Apprehending from his alarmed relative's refusal of the offender's name and address, that she foresaw the consequence of making

them known, O'Finn now resolved to have recourse to stratagem. He accordingly returned to the house, and assured his cousin that, upon reflection, he thought a letter "well pinned in the shape of a *caution*, might serve as well as sending to the rude ruffian a formal friend."

The *ruse* succeeded. The unsuspecting spinster, perfectly appeased at what she expressed to be "a more manly, and high-minded course of proceeding," at once committed to paper the name, address, and even "calling," of the "rude offender."

O'Finn was now permitted to depart in peace.

From a circle of his countrymen seated at a tavern table in the vicinity of Covent Garden, and who were warmly engaged discussing their seventh jug of rum toddy, (for in those days whiskey was not a purchasable liquor in London,) O'Finn had selected his friend, a Mr. Edward Richard Ryan O'Regan. The selection had been made by mute means. In matters of

mischief, the penetration of O'Regan had become proverbial, and therefore to "Ned" a "wink had been deemed better than a nod."

"Ned," said O'Finn, addressing O'Regan, as soon as the latter had withdrawn himself from his jug and jocular friends—"Ned, d'ye smell a rat?"

"No, but I smell powther," was the quaint reply.

"You're the boy after my own heart," said O'Finn, ardently squeezing the hand of his friend.

"Which way is it?" asked the first of seconds: "though, faith," added he, "that matters little as long as there's *no* apology on *our* part."

"Apology, Ned! Shew me an O'Finn that ever tuck (took), much more made, an apology to mortal: so make your mind asy on that score. Now, Ned, take my instructions, and then we can pop into that tavern (pointing to a pot-house, now a gin-palace of the first order

of magnificence), pin the paper, and compleat the matter in the regular way."

The friends had already seated themselves in the corner-box of an apartment *called* a coffee-room, on the floor of which was seen streaks of saw-dust, and overhead volumes of suffocating smoke issuing from the puffing mouths of ill-attired topers muddling in malt.

"Waiter," called O'Finn, "pin, ink, paper, and two glasses of rum-punch, in a crack."

"Asy, Fitz," said O'Regan, "sure isn't one glass enough for both?"

"You're right, Ned; for it won't do just now, as Hamlet says, to put pyson in our mouths to stale away our brains."

O'Finn could mar and misquote dramatic passages better than most people.

The required "articles of war" were laid upon the table.

"Now mind, Fitz," said the second, perceiving the principal had seized upon the pen with eager haste, "mind, the fewer words the

better; and, above all things, note the *exact* time, and give the right address."

"What, Ned, from a pot-house?"

"By no manner o' manes. Isn't it asy to sink that, and give the sign of the house?"

The hint was taken.

O'Finn, who prided himself upon his epistolary talents, had now completed what he termed his "illegant note of invitation," which, upon meeting with the full approbation of his fire-eating friend, was sealed, and duly addressed.

"Now, Fitz," said the delighted second, rising from his seat, and placing his credentials carefully in his pocket-book, "now, I'm off with this, as fast as foot can follow. You settle the bill, and lave me to settle the rest."

"The curling-irons, Ned."

The hint was delivered in a purposely suppressed tone. The hand of the speaker was raised to his mouth, as if determined his polished phrase should not be intercepted by ruder ears.

"Make yourself asy on that score. In

the turn of a lock, Fitz; and 'faith they're ready to turn the locks of the nicest lad in the land!"

And, so saying, O'Regan departed to hasten hostilities, and (to him apparently a matter of minor import) to hasten possibly the termination of his friend's existence.

CHAPTER V.

— “ Give her what comforts
The quality of her passion shall require.”

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

“ Without a friend the world is but a wilderness.”

ANON.

MRS. HUNTER, who has been already introduced to the reader as a jovial and jocular personage, was nevertheless a warm-hearted woman. Having no children to engross her time and affections, she went about doing good, not only with her purse, but in that more difficult and delicate office, the bestowal of counsel and sympathy on those whom sorrow had

touched, or who were otherwise in perplexity. Her plump, good-humoured appearance was in keeping with the cheerful frankness of her mind. She was one of those few women who know how to keep a secret. While actively employed in aiding a friend with her kind agency, she would never by a word or look give the slightest hint that she was acquainted with the circumstances regarding which that agency was put into motion.

Among those who found relief in the sympathy and in the cheering advice of Mrs. Hunter was the young lady who acted so prominent a part in our first chapter, and who had formed an alliance with one especially denounced by her relatives. Their marriage had been secret, though the elopement of the lady from her guardian had given rise to conjectures fatal to her reputation, followed by an alienation of the property left to her under certain conditions, which it was alleged she had forfeited by her conduct.

Thus circumstanced, and living with her

husband in London on the narrow means possessed by the latter, she had been noticed by Mrs. Hunter, who, attracted by her uncomplaining resignation, and the grace and sweetness of her character, had cultivated an intimacy with her, and often sought to soothe her lonely hours in the absence of her husband, and to keep from too severe a pressure those thoughts which would otherwise have distracted her.

Having called one morning on her friend, she found her in an unusual state of dejection.

“ Oh ! Mrs. Hunter,” exclaimed the young wife, “ I fear my unhappiness is increasing on me—my miseries multiply—I have new woes to meet, to which what I have hitherto suffered is as nothing—my husband ! my dear husband ! ”

“ Tell me all,” replied Mrs. Hunter: “ we shall find, I am sure, that your grief is causeless.”

“ I have received to-day,” pursued the agitated lady, “ an intimation that he is connected

with an association against the present government in Ireland, and that officers are in active search of him."

" This is only the weak invention of your *friends*—I was going to say—to harass you, and to engender suspicion between two loving hearts. My life on it, the accusation is false. A nobler minded man never existed than your husband. What! *he* engaged in any thing treasonable? It cannot be: or, if so, I'll lay my life there is 'something in the state of Denmark' which justifies his interference."

" Thank you, my dear friend," returned the young wife, " for your kind opinion of him. My own estimation of his character is equally high. He will do nothing that is not honourable; but, alas! circumstanced as we are, living here in privacy (not to say concealment), having scarcely funds enough for decent subsistence, and being conscious that we are in danger, on private grounds, of persecution, my husband is not in a position to brave the frowns of power in a public cause."

“ Certainly not,” replied the widow, “ and therefore it is that I will not believe you have been correctly informed. He loves you too well, and is too deeply sensible of the difficulty of his present situation, to be diverted by any thing extraneous.

“ You have just spoken to me,” she continued, “ of your pecuniary affairs, and I thank you for your confidence, because I may now, without offence, approach the subject. To be frank with you, (for I love frankness in others, and endeavour to attain it myself,) I have often watched for an opportunity of speaking with you upon this point. In a word, then, make me your banker. This is commercial language, I know; but, pray, consider that I am a sugar-baker’s widow, and am so accustomed to the phrases of the counting-house that they will occasionally slip out.”

“ I understand your generosity, my dear friend,” returned the distressed lady, “ and am truly thankful for its manifestation; but my husband is inaccessible in such matters, and I

should not dare to mention to him what you so nobly propose."

"I never called you foolish before, but I am very much inclined to do so now," said Mrs. Hunter, in a tone which the more marked her sincerity of purpose. "Recollect what I said: it was an offer to become your *banker*; and all the world, at least all that portion of it east of Temple-bar, knows that a banker requires his advances to be returned; so make your dignity easy on that account. Of what use to me is the money which my worthy and pains-taking husband left to my sole control, if I cannot make it of convenience to those I love? It is impossible for me otherwise to employ it. My parents are dead—I have no child, no brother, no sister, and am not aware that there is in existence any nephew, niece, or cousin to claim my affection. Will you then be so cruel as to deny me the gratification which would result from my feeling that I had bestowed comfort on a valued friend, more especially as that friend has to provide for a young child?"

“ This is too kind,” returned the wife, “ and your offer is made with such genuine delicacy of spirit, that I will promise you to communicate it to my husband. Let me, however, say that we have doubts whether the provisions of the will, by which certain property is bequeathed to me, *are* broken by marriage. We are, however, so solitary, so friendless (pardon my saying so after the proofs I have just had of your sympathy and munificence), that we know not what steps we ought to take to vindicate our rights. Besides, my dear friend, we have a subtle and crafty enemy to deal with ; one who, rancorous as his present purposes are, made his first approaches to me in the guise of love.”

“ I see it all,” exclaimed Mrs. Hunter. “ This man wooed you as an heiress ? ”

“ He did.”

“ You rejected him ? ”

“ With scorn.”

“ And now that you have married another, he

seeks, I suppose, to crush his rival. Am I not right? Nay, do not be so despairing. You shall *not* be sacrificed to mean hate. Cunning shall be met with cunning.

“Now listen to me,” continued the widow; “you are aware that I live in a boarding-house. All boarding-houses are vulgar enough, I know; but then I am not a lady—nothing but a citizen’s widow; and besides, I cannot exist unless surrounded by gossips—and where shall I find them except in such places? Well, among my sources of diversion in Mrs. Martin’s reception for stray gentlemen, it has been my fortune to have more than one admirer. You smile; but portly as I am, ‘like three single gentlewomen rolled into one,’ it is nevertheless true. My most pressing Lothario—though, for my own amusement, I have played at fast and loose with him—is, I am sure, not so spiteful a suitor as he whom you have discarded with disdain. He will never persecute me,” she added, laughingly;

“ but, nevertheless, I will match him against your enemy.”

“ How do you mean ? ” inquired Mrs. Hunter’s companion.

“ Thus,” replied the widow. “ My *avowed* admirer is a barrister, known by the sweet-sounding name of Waddy. He is not, I am told, very sagacious in the higher branches of the law, but perhaps on this very account he is the more cunning in all its subterfuges, and therefore the better able to match a rogue. Put your case in his hands.”

“ Would it were possible ! ” sighed the younger lady.

“ But it *is* possible. His services can be commanded. I will give you a letter to him, and he will afford you the more earnest attention, out of his extremely disinterested affection to me and my charms. I shall see you to-morrow again on this subject: meanwhile you will, I feel certain, have been disabused of your apprehensions respecting the political danger of your husband. Good day,”

continued Mrs. Hunter, shaking her afflicted friend by the hand as she rose to depart. “Good day—cheer up, and be sure you obtain your husband’s concurrence as to my taking upon myself the honours of a banker. Do not let him say ‘No.’”

CHAPTER VI.

— “I never in my life
Did hear a challenge urged more *modestly.*”

SHAKSPEARE.

“ Why, Valentine, what braggardism is this?”
TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

IT was well said by an able and distinguished writer, a moralist acquainted with all the workings of the human heart, that “if, in all cases of personal dispute, the seconds were as averse to fighting as the principals, there would be little of blood shed.”

This is true for the most part, but the maxim had no application in the instance we have now to record. It is impossible to

write apophthegms touching the sons of Erin. La Rochefoucauld and La Bruyere would have been perplexed in their vocation, had they lived in a land where man is an anomaly that defies analysis.

Our Milesian principal and second were for three days both burning for the fray. The latter was ready, even without knowing a word of the dispute, to accompany his friend to the field ; and had the least occasion (such as sudden or desperate illness) arisen to prevent O’Finn from keeping his appointment, O’Regan would willingly have supplied his place. A duel is of all things the pleasantest morning pastime to a gentleman of the Emerald Isle. Well, indeed, may it be called *Ire-land*.

It was now nearer the hour of eight than seven of a still sultry evening in the middle of May, when Waddy, who had been “brushing up” for a certain secret excursion, was nearly stunned by a thundering knock at the outer door of his chambers.

“ That’s a thumper, at all events,” said the

uncoated lawyer, proceeding to perform the part of porter—"I warrant there is a brief at the back of that."

"Has Counsellor Waddy returned to town?" said the stranger, eyeing the lawyer, who held in his hand the brush with which he had been busily brushing his doffed garment.

"He has, sir," was the brief reply.

"It's mighty strange he did n't come sooner. I have been nine times after him within these three days."

"I presume, sir, your business presses.—Walk in, sir — you 'll find a chair," said Waddy, closing his outer door.

"I 'd rather stand, sir, if it 's all the same to you."

"May I ask your business, sir?" said the lawyer, surveying with stern intensity the stranger from head to foot.

"I want to see Counsellor Waddy, sir."

"He stands before you, sir."

“ Surely I’ve not mistaken my man,” said the stranger, with a look of suspicion.

“ No, no, sir ; there’s only one of the name enrolled on the list. All right, sir ; sit down, pray : I’ll return in a minute.”

And here the barrister retired into a small inner apartment, to tie on his cravat, and resume his coat.

Waddy’s toilet was soon completed. The stranger had not long to await his return.

“ You were very fortunate in finding me at home, sir,” said he, presenting his visitor with a chair, “ very fortunate, indeed, sir ; for I was thinking of taking a little stroll in the vicinity of Bloomsbury.”

“ I’ve just come from that *quarther* myself, sir,” said the stranger, in accents which at once proclaimed his Milesian origin.

“ From your *accent*,” said Waddy, with a cynical sneer, “ I should have said you had come from Ireland.”

“ Not immmediately, sir ; but I’ve come

from an Irish gentleman!" retorted the visitor, rising from his seat.

"Oh! sir, I do n't mean to doubt your lineage. Gentlemen from Ireland," returned the lawyer, "are always well connected. But pray, sir, may I ask, if your present business relates to Irish affairs? for as yet I've had nothing to do in *that* way. In fact, sir, I've had no dealings with Irish solicitors. I may be misinformed, but I *have* been told, that gentlemen from your side of the water are much given to push heavy matters, which often require time and deliberation."

"In matters like mine," returned the stranger, "things must be done in a hurry."

"Well, sir," said Waddy, "I'm all attention. Open your business."

"I must open my pocket-book first," returned the man of business, unfolding a greasy leathern case, which had once passed for red morocco.

“Then you have brought no brief, sir?” said the lawyer.

“No, but I’ve brought a bit of an invitation,” said the stranger, handing to the lawyer a note addressed to “*Counsellor* Waddy, Inner Temple.”

“All right, sir,” said Waddy, reading the address. “This, I suppose, contains a retainer.”

“It’s any thing but a *de-tainer*, I can tell ye.”

“Come, that’s not so bad,” said Waddy, chuckling. “The Irishman all over—prefers his joke to his business.”

“In this business, I’m thinking, you’ll soon find there’s *no* joke.”

The envelope of the “invitation” had already been taken off, and thrown upon the table.

“Why, bless my soul! what the devil’s all this?” said the barrister, throwing a hurried eye over the contents of the letter, and turning

to the signature of the writer, “ There’s some mistake here—evidently so——”

“ Read out, sir. I’ll set you right, if there’s any thing wrong,” said the bearer of the letter.

Waddy proceeded to read aloud the contents of the note which he held in his hand.

“ *Harlequin Hotel, Bloomsbury,*
May 18, 1794.

“ Sir,

“ It having been this moment intimated to me, by a lady nearly related in blood to myself, that you had recently offered to that *unprotected* female the grossest insult, and had taken with her the most unwarrantable and unbecoming liberties, I, sir, as the relative of that highly insulted lady, have to demand from you that *satisfaction* due from one gentleman to another.

“ My friend, Mr. Ryan O’Regan, is the bearer of this invitation, who is perfectly prepared for a ready reference to a friend. As time presses,

I have to request the meeting may not be delayed longer than daylight to-morrow morning.

“ I have the honour to be,

“ Sir, yours, &c.

“ PHELAN FITZGERALD O’FINN.

“ To Counsellor Waddy, Barrister at Law,
Inner Temple.”

“ A perfect mystery !” said Waddy, as he concluded the perusal of O’Finn’s “ invitation.” “ Pray, sir, is this by way of hoax —an Irish practical joke? Because, in this country, people employ their time better than trifling it away in tricks of this nature.”

“ There’s a wide difference,” returned O’Regan, “ between a foolish hoax, as you call it, and a rael affair of honour; and as to trifling time, sir, it is you, sir, that is trifling with my time, by affecting ignorance of a matter that’s in every body’s mouth!”

“ Every body’s mouth!” iterated Waddy,
“ the man must be mad!”

“ Come, come, sir, this equivocation is unworthy of a gentleman.”

“ *Equivocation, sir?*”—echoed the indignant lawyer.

“ Isn’t the word English?” returned the Irish fire-eater; “ upon that score, lawyers are seldom deficient.”

“ Sir, this language is really insufferable!” said Waddy, rising from his chair under considerable excitement: “ I desire, sir, you instantly quit this room!”

“ Come, come, sir, you’ve not to dole with a child—I’m not to be bullied in this business—refer me at once to a friend, or take the consequences.”

“ Will you be pleased, sir,” said Waddy, “ first to refer me to the alleged affair.”

“ Offince has been offered to a lady—a meeting’s demanded,—what more do you want?”

“ In the name of heaven!” ejaculated Wad-

dy, increasing in wrath ; “ is a man to make reparation, or risk his life, for the forward impertinence or rude behaviour of another ?”

“ Come, sir, that’s mighty mane, to try and fix the offence upon another—mighty mane indeed, counsellor.”

“ Now, sir, I see,” said Waddy, assuming a cooler and collected tone, “ I see that there is only one way of convincing a gentleman of your stamp of the absurdity of persisting in error. Will you have the goodness to reply to the following questions ?”

“ Counsellor, I didn’t come here to be cross-examined,” returned the rude Milesian.

“ No, sir, merely *direct* questions.”

“ Well, out with them.”

“ Do *I* look like a foreigner ?”

“ I can’t say much for your looks, any how.”

“ Well, sir, does ‘ Waddy ’ sound like a foreign name ?”

“ It sounds common enough.”

“ And now, sir, for the last and most important point. Have *you* not, or your friend,

by some Irish bull-headed blunder or another, confounded me with a German gentleman?"

"Not at all—but I'm thinking it's the cousin garman of a gentleman that has complately confounded the Counsellor. Look, sir," said he, taking up O'Finn's note which lay upon the table, "look at these words. Now, sir, the lady, it seems, has declared to her blood relation, my respected friend, that Counsellor Waddy, and Waddy alone, was the person who had *darr'd* to take with her such unwarrantable and unbecoming liberties. Read, sir! read—get over that if you can."

Waddy for several seconds remained mute. He manifestly was labouring under some unpleasant impression. Conscience, that busybody of the brain, had brought to his mind's eye reminiscences of an awkward nature. At length, removing the hand which had supported his drooping head, he said—

"I see, sir, there is some little explanation due to the complaining parties. I now begin to perceive something of the matter. But I

have seen the lady twice, and twice conversed with her since——”

“ She admits that, sir,” interrupted O'Regan —“ she informed my friend she never saw you but twice before ; and that your ogling her at a public table was the height of indacency.”

“ I can't understand,” said Waddy, “ how an admiring eye could be taken for an insulting look.”

“ By your own account, sir,” said O'Regan, “ you stand self-convicted ; for call it what you will, you must have been ogling the lady ; and, as sure as my name's Ryan O'Regan, so sure will you be posted to-morrow morning, if, within two hours, I'm not refarrered to a friend. And, if it won't be a purty paragraph for the newspapers, never mind :—‘ *Insulter of female innocence—ruffianly and cowardly conduct of a Counsellor,*’ will furnish a buteeful heading for the fashionable news !”

O'Regan's sarcastic threats appeared to arouse in Waddy ideas which were painful to a man on the eve of professional advance-

ment; for Waddy was already engaged in a coming suit replete with interest to a numerous portion of the public.

“Good heaven!” he exclaimed, pacing the room with clasped hands, “upon what demoniacal mischief are you intent? Is it your object, sir, to blast the character of an innocent man, and to blight at a blow all his professional hopes?”

“There’s no other course left, sir,” returned the unmoved Milesian, insensible to every consideration but that of hastening hostilities; “no other course left, sir, if you persist in refusing to refer me to a friend.”

“A friend, sir?” said Waddy, raising his voice; “I have need of none—a reference to one would at once amount to a tacit admission of guilt.”

“Counsellor, that talk might do mighty well in a court of justice; but you’ll not find me so asyly humbugged. This is the third day I’ve lost in looking for you; and now I’ve found you——”

“Sir, I was out of town on professional business,” interrupted the lawyer.

And here the reader is apprised, that for three successive evenings, O’Finn and his friend had made the Harlequin their *rendezvous*, or rather “War-Office,” for the transaction of belligerent business.

“By all that’s right and rational in man,” ejaculated the lawyer in a loud declamatory strain—“a more unreasonable, inconsiderate, cruel-minded——”

“Asy, asy, sir,” interrupted O’Regan, raising his hand to cut short the barrister’s burst of personal invective: “hear me now, sir; for, by the Lord! I’ve listened to you upon this matter longer than I ever lent ear to mortal before. But ere we part, just be pleased to remember Ryan O’Regan’s last words: three or four shots, at twelve paces apart, is child’s play compared with the terrible pepperings you’ll get in all the newspapers, and the ugly *large-letter* posting that shall proclaim your shame in all the highways, byways, lanes and

alleys lading to every law court in London, Dublin, Limerick, and Cork."

O'Regan's hand had been already on the bolt of the door, when Waddy requested his ear. O'Regan approached the table still uncovered—

"Well, sir," said he, "what more have you to say now?"

"Mr. O'Regan," said Waddy, recovering his self-possession, "if the party I intend to consult immediately upon your departure deems a refusal on my part to name a friend to confer with *you* upon this unlooked-for, and, I may add, forced affair, at all incompatible with the rules observed in matters of this nature, I shall abide by the decision of that party—for the scruples I entertain upon what is vulgarly termed '*giving satisfaction*' shall never be stigmatised with the reproach of cowardice."

"'T is now, just as I 'm going away, you 're beginning to talk like a sinsible man."

"Well, sir," resumed the lawyer, "I have no more to say upon the subject, save, that by

whatever decision I am bound to abide, no *friend* can I possibly find before one o'clock to-morrow afternoon. At the same time, you will please to bear in recollection, that I have not refused, when properly and becomingly demanded, an apologetic explanation."

Like many other people in the world, Waddy considered that an apology, adroitly managed, might partake more of *excuse* than of exculpation for the alleged offence. O'Regan, however, informed him that "*none* could be taken—that he had already received instructions to that effect."

"What! sir, do you mean to insinuate," said Waddy, "that an apology is not sufficient to satisfy any gentleman, be he whom he may, upon a mere *imaginary* matter?"

"*I* imagine not, sir."

"Why not?"

"Mr. O'Finn, I tell you, can't receive an apology."

"And pray, sir, why should Mister O'Finn be a solitary exception to the received rule laid down in the laws of honour?"

“None of his *name* ever tuck an apology yet,” returned O’Regan, repeating his friend’s favourite phrase; “and it isn’t now, I promise you, he *manes* to begin.”

“Well, sir,” said Waddy, approaching his chamber-door, “matters must remain as they are.”

And here O’Regan retired, leaving the lawyer to seek his consulting friend.

CHAPTER VII.

“ Accidents of hourly proof.”

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

“ How oft when men are at the point of death,
Have they been merry.”

ROMEO AND JULIET.

ON the same evening, and in all probability at the precise period in which Waddy had been most excited by the irrational demands and threats of the Hibernian bully, a fatal catastrophe had happened under the roof of a certain “ establishment.” The circumstances originated thus :—

In those days, it was a fashionable folly to

deck the head with borrowed hair—in short, for people of *all* ages to wear wigs. An inmate of Mrs. Martin's establishment, more remarkable for absence than for presence of mind, had been induced, at the suggestion of some designing damsel, to follow the fashion of the day. With this gentleman it had been a constant custom to indulge, after dinner, in a little of "horizontal recreation." In the summer evenings he was wont to throw off his wig, and then to throw his person upon his bed, with a book in his hand.

On this occasion the domestic of the "establishment" had twice informed him that his presence was required in the drawing-room. A third time Mrs. Moore had despatched the servant to intimate to the literary lounger "that she was tired of waiting—that the chess-men had been nearly an hour ranged on the board." (A challenge had been accepted at dinner.)

"Say," said the absent gentleman, responding to the bearer of the missive, who stood at

the door of his little low-roofed attic, “ Say, Thomas, that I shall be down in less than a minute.”

The gentleman kept his word—descended the stairs—opened the drawing-room door, and entering it, perfectly unconscious of his uncovered condition, (a punster would have said, the then “ *state of his poll*,”) approached the table at which sullenly sat the petticoated Philidor.

At first his *entrée* produced only a general stare, followed by an interchange of significant looks ; but when he deliberately drew forth a chair, and sat himself down in front of his half petrified opponent, the room rang with roars of laughter, loud and long.

Poor Mrs. Hunter, at all times the merriest in harmless mischief, became convulsed with laughter. To a person of her short neck and rotund figure, any indulgence in an emotion likely to end in a spasmodic affection (and violent risibility is violent spasm) is not without danger. But, unhappily for her, she had

too strong a sense of the ludicrous to permit her to view unmoved the preposterous figure before her ; and accordingly, that which began on her part, in an ill-suppressed titter, was followed by violent laughter ending in hysterics.

In the tumultuous ecstacy of the company, the sufferer's gutteral sobs, and drooping position passed unobserved. At length a sudden and heavy fall aroused general attention. Mrs. Hunter had dropped from her seat, with her face to the floor. Several seconds elapsed ere sufficient presence of mind, and indeed of personal strength, could be summoned to raise and invert the position of the sufferer.

The scene that ensued is not to be described. That it was appalling, the mind can readily conceive ; but then, it had been rendered doubly distressing, from the very circumstance of its having succeeded to peals of uproarious merriment. To some, the sense of sight appeared deceptive—they could scarcely believe that which they really beheld—for in-

cidents ludicrous, painful, laughable, and piteous, followed in fast succession. The impression on the mind of most resembled the wild and incoherent workings of a troubled dream.

Mrs. Martin and the elderly gentleman from Birmingham (the Coroner's Inquest returned his name as Button, but Bolton, indisputably, was the name of the deposing party,) were the only two, who at all retained their self-possession. The former removed the twisted turban which encircled her friend's head, and with a common case-knife which had been previously placed upon the tea-table, promptly severed the lace of the unyielding corset which compressed the waist of the dying lady; whilst the latter, with a view to withdraw the blood from the brain and restore the lost circulation, employed all the manual force of which he was master, in his application of friction to the feet.

The absent gentleman sought to *absent* himself in search of surgical aid; but in his hurry

to descend the stairs, he unfortunately fell over the tea-urn, which the servant in his fright had left upon the first landing. Scalded dreadfully in several parts of his body, the poor bald-pated gentleman remained for a considerable time unaided in agonising torture. His moans were drowned in the shrill screams and soprano shouts of the “brevet beauty,” who was seen wringing her hands, as she ran from room to room, exhibiting, in her pallid and affrighted features, all the uncontrollable workings of defeated hope.

In short, had a passing stranger entered the house—heard the stunning roars of laughter—the deep moans—the piercing screams, and witnessed the contrasted incidents which were presented to the eye, he could only have compared the scene to one in which comedy and tragedy were struggling for mastery.

But Waddy and his truculent opponents were still strangers to this catastrophe. Not that a fore-knowledge of the widow’s death

would have subdued the wrath of the inflexible Phelan, or at all debarred him from the pleasurable opportunity of exerting his best endeavours to diminish the list of the living ; but an untoward and tormenting event had occurred which placed one party in a most unpleasant plight, and left the other to be tortured by the most distressing and distracting doubts.

Instead of appearing at the appointed hour, O'Regan was waited for in vain. To O'Finn his absence was quite unaccountable—a perfect mystery. A man so *religiously* punctual in affairs of honour—a man too, who upon parting had promised, whatever might be the result of his mission, to return to the *Harlequin* at ten, or half-past ten at furthest. These were considerations little calculated to quiet O'Finn's restless impatience.

The watchman had already called the hour beyond the appointed time. The four pages of the evening paper, had been turned, and turned again, and again ; but nothing in the

print before O’Finn, presented to his “mind’s eye” aught but the unaccountable absence of his friend. To him, time had appeared interminable—his suspense had approximated to mental torture, and his position became painfully perplexing, when the waiter informed him, “ ’twas time to shut up.”

O’Finn sought to prolong his stay, assuring the landlord he expected momentarily the arrival of a gentleman on the most important and pressing business. But Boniface was not to be moved. At that hour he was more in the habit of *moving* others, and he who had honoured the *Harlequin* by his pen and presence, was now not even so far favoured, as to be allowed to stand *last* on the rejected list.

Long after the day had dawned, our knight-errant, like the vigilant sentinel pacing his post, was seen eyeing with intense anxiety every being who in male attire approached the inhospitable *Harlequin*. At length, harassed in mind and fatigued in body, he determined

to follow the example of the drowsy “Charleys,” who had already began to desert their respective beats for their respective beds.

It would seem somewhat anomalous, that a person, like O’Finn, who prided himself so much on his knowledge of “things in general,” should have been so totally “at sea” upon the subject of his missing man. One would have supposed, that he had been sufficiently acquainted with the “ways and means” of his second, and “*second self*,” to awaken suspicions touching the probable cause of his non-return. But, no, it was what O’Regan had termed his “*pistol punctuality*,” that absorbed every other consideration; forgetting that in “*pistol punctuality*” nothing was so likely to produce “a miss-fire” as want of punctuality in payment.

And such was the fact. O’Regan had hardly left the lawyer, or had time to congratulate himself on the seeming success of his mission, ere, to use a nautical phrase, “he was brought-up all standing with a round turn.” In

his haste to return to the “*Harlequin*,” he was *Clown* enough to take Chancery-lane by way of the shortest *route*. Had he known any thing of the localities of London, he would not have directed his footsteps

“Through paths where wolves would fear to prey ;”

paths, which for years had been the favourite resort and rendezvous of the lowest, but not the least active, “limbs of the law.” But O’Regan came from a land where action usually precedes thought.

There was yet sufficient light to discover the “grim visage” and vulgar attire of the individual who had so unceremoniously and unseasonably impeded the Milesian’s hurried pace.

“Well, what’s the matter?” cried the startled second, addressing the sullen, sleek-haired, broad-shouldered, top-booted gentleman in brown, who had so suddenly seized his elbow, and held it in his herculean grasp.

“Not much, I take it,” was the brief reply.

“Then why so stop a body, when hurrying

home?" said O'Regan, while a momentary suspicion crossed his mind that some officious friend in Waddy's outer chamber might have overheard his conversation with the Barrister.

"Cos that body doubled me yesterday a'fternoon."

"*Me?*" said O'Regan, "I never saw you before."

"No! then I never seed two peas more like nor *you* are to the chap as gived me the slip yesterday in Common-garden market. But come, as time seems to be pressing with you, d'ye never know nothing of a Mr. Thomas Thorn?"

The question was at once a thorn in O'Regan's side.

"Oh! I know—I know all about it. I intinded, to-day, to talk the matter over with him, but pressing business previnted me."

"Can't I take it, talk the taylor over now. Can you settle the debt? Pay the costs?"

"Faith! I have n't, just now, as much as a rap about me."

“ Got yer bail at hand? Two housekeepers, you know,” said the bailiff, bluntly.

“ Bail is it? If it was in Cork I was, I would n’t be wanting for fifty, ay, or a hundred housekeepers to go bail for twenty times the dirty taylor’s dirty amount.”

“ Ah! that’s the old tune—wont do *here*—so come, over the way wi’ you—there’s *your* lodgin to-night,” said the sneering catchpole, pointing to a “ spunging-house ” on the opposite side of the street.

Knowing his friend’s anxiety at the “ Harlequin,” O’Regan sought to dispatch the bailiff with a written intimation of the “ untoward event ;” but Catchpole pleaded in excuse “ other fish to fry,” adding, sneeringly, that “ he never could abide becoming the bearer of *bad* tidings.”

And with these consolatory words Mr. Ryan O’Regan was turned over to the custody of the keeper of a spunging-house in Chancery-lane.

To the valorous lawyer, O’Regan’s arrest

had been as a sealed letter ; news so welcome had not reached his ear. Had he received the least intimation of the “fire-eater’s” fate, he would have spared himself much of the bodily fatigue and mental torture he had suffered in seeking his “consulting friend.” Like O’Finn’s, Waddy’s intended second was “among the missing.” The gentleman had left town, and his “return” was said “to be uncertain.”

To ensure the assistance and attendance of a friend was no easy matter. A selfish, cold-hearted man, of abstracted habits—a man who knew not how to be importunate without offending ; or to be kind and friendly, even in refusal ; was not likely, at a moment of pressing emergency, to find a friend willing to accompany him to the “field.” What was to be done ?

At length a notable scheme was hit on, which placed Waddy in a position, inducing the uncharitable surmise that, to supply the absence of his “consulting friend,” he had

sought the advice of a person who ought to have been the *last* to whom he should have intimated the delicate situation in which he then stood. Indeed his enemies had unhesitatingly asserted that he had acted upon the philosophic axiom which pronounces that—

“ The better part of valour is discretion.”—

Whether such assertions proceeded from false or veritable sources may be doubted ; but *certes*, a striking incident, which stands upon record, would warrant the latter assumption. An hour prior to the period which Waddy, on the previous evening, had assured to O'Regan that, if his position demanded it, he would endeavour to procure a friend to confer with that gentleman, the lawyer had been himself apprehended, and compelled to enter into recognizances, with two collateral securities, to preserve the peace towards his Majesty's liege subjects, and especially towards the person of Mr. Phelan Fitzgerald O'Finn, against whom had

been also issued a similar warrant in favour of Waddy.

And here we are compelled to close this chapter to introduce the Barrister in a new character, one in which he had been so long ambitious to appear.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ The court is prepared—
The judges are met,
The lawyers all ranged.”

BEGGAR’S OPERA.

“ A legal servant of all work. One who sometimes makes his gown his cloak for browbeating a witness.”

TIN TRUMPET.

THE personal conflict from which Waddy had been recently released, had now to be succeeded by an “action,” in which the contest was to be decided by brains, rather than by bullets.

It has been already stated that the Tenant of the Temple had been retained in a trial which he anticipated would afford a favourable

opportunity for the display of his forensic talents. The day fixed for the decision of the pending "case" had now arrived.

From the circumstance of the leading counsel being engaged in another suit, Waddy had to conduct his client's defence. This was a chance for Walter, which produced many professional remarks—nor was slander silent upon the subject of his late apprehension, for Waddy was anything but popular with his brethren of the bar.

At an early hour the Court of "*Common Pleas*" was crowded to suffocation with auditors more in the habit of attending "Turf-meetings and race-courses" than of congregating in courts of law.

The counsel for the plaintiff opened the case. Reparation had been sought for the loss of a valuable mare, which, by the consent of the proprietor (a horse dealer), had been taken on "trial" by the defendant for a day's fox-hunting ; and, from an accident befalling the mare in the field, the animal had lost its life.

The “conditions” upon which the trial was to be undertaken had been already attested by three witnesses. The fourth deponent, a rough, uncouth farrier—afforded to the spectators in the court considerable amusement, from the dogged manner in which he refused to give his testimony, “until paid his travelling expenses.”

“ My lord,” said he, appealing to the bench, “ I knows the lor allows it—and I ’m sartin sure, after a ride of forty miles, a man ’s entitled to claim his *diaculum*.”*

The laughter produced by this malapropism having subsided, and the witness’s claim being at length admitted by the Court, his testimony was received, which went to attest the sound condition of the animal when taken on trial.

The Crier of the Court was now directed to call the next witness.

“ Phelan Fitzgerald O’Finn”—“ Phelan Fitzgerald O’Finn”—and a third time the walls

* *Viaticum*—law term—synonymous with “ mileage ” or travelling expenses.

within and without the Court reverberated with these high-sounding names.

For this witness Waddy was little prepared. That name had already caused him so much uneasiness as to preclude his concealing the agitation which the mere announcement of it had now produced. His head hung over his brief, and never once did he attempt to turn his face from the leaves of the folio which trembled in his hand, as he turned them over in fast succession. At length, the plaintiff's solicitor intimated to the Court, that he was apprehensive the witness would not appear—not having been personally served with a summons. The fact is, O'Finn being apprised that there was a warrant out against him, had precipitately left town.

“Call the next witness,” said the Judge.

Here “Richard was himself again.” The leaves of the brief were again brought into fold, and the barrister threw himself boldly back in his seat.

The most material witness for the plaintiff

had been already produced. In his testimony throughout there was much of superfluous remark; and the blunt manner in which he delivered his evidence determined Waddy, as he phrased it—to “work him well on the cross.”

The counsel for the plaintiff having now sat down. Waddy arose to cross-examine the witness—

“Now, sir,” said the lawyer, addressing the witness in the box.—“Now, sir, before I put a single question to you, let me recommend you to be less loquacious, and to confine yourself more to the relation of simple facts.”

To this lecture, the witness appeared to pay little attention.

“Do you *hear*, sir?” vociferated Waddy, darting at the witness one of his angular looks, which, as usual, failed in effect. “Turn round, sir, and face those gentlemen, if, indeed, you can bring yourself to *face* a jury.”

The witness altered his position in the box;

but Waddy's undue remark was met by an admonitory shake of the head from the learned Judge on the Bench.

“ You have already stated on oath, that the accident which befel your master's *hack*
_____”

“ I never called *my* master's mare an *ack*,” interrupted the witness, sullenly.

“ Well, then, your master's mare; you seem to be excessively nice in your distinction of terms,” continued Waddy, endeavouring to convey a wink to the Jury: “ you have already stated that the accident which befel this second *Bucephalus* had entirely originated in the bad riding of my highly respectable client.”

“ I says so again,” returned the witness, doggedly.

“ Upon what authority, sir, do you here venture to make so positive an asseveration?”

“ Why, what man as know'd any thing of an orse, wou'd-a' thought o' pushin' the poor hanimal in 'eavy ground.”

“ Will you please to reply to the question?

Upon what authority, I repeat, are you so positive?"

" My own; I seed him pushin' the poor creetur on ground as wou'd 'ave fairly killed a bullock."

" Killed a bullock!" iterated Waddy, after the manner usually adopted by legal adepts when endeavouring to gain time to turn in their thoughts how they are to bewilder a witness, and invent some new expedient to pervert the truth.

" Pray, sir, were you upon this ground which you represent as so excessively heavy?"

" If I wasn't, how could I 'a seed it?"

" Were you there upon the day in question?"

" Yes, on the day as we lost the mare."

" Is it customary for ostlers to amuse themselves with the sports of the field?"

" Can't say—never was an osler."

" Never?"

" No, never; never nothing under master's groom."

“ Well, then, is it customary for grooms to partake of their master’s amusements?”

“ ’Twas never no amusement to me.”

“ What! do you mean to assert—(recollect you’re on your oath, sir,) that on *that* day you did not follow the chase?”

“ My business was to follow master’s mare.”

“ I see, then, you followed on foot.”

“ No, I didn’t; I followed on orseback.”

“ On horseback?—Take care what you’re about, sir.”

“ I knows well what I’m about.”

“ You do, do you? then pray let us know what you *were* about on the day you followed your master’s mare.”

“ I’ve already said, I was watching the riding of the rider.”

“ And yet,” said the quibbling lawyer, “ you have just deposed on oath, that it was your business to follow your master’s mare. Are you aware of the punishment, sir, the law awards to perjury?”

Here the counsel for the plaintiff interposed,

asserting that the system of examination pursued by the learned gentleman was quite unprecedented. Waddy, however, was permitted to proceed.

“Are you prepared to state the age of this *nonpareil*?”

“The age of *what*?”

“Why, of this matchless mare.”

“The mare never *was* matched.”

“Don’t be impertinent, sir; how old was the animal?”

“Six-off—seven, come next grass.”

“*Seven*?—recollect, sir, you’re on your oath. Will you swear that the mare was not nearer *twelve* than seven, at the cutting of the next grass?”

Here, a titter among the patrons of the turf pervaded the Court; encouraged by which, the witness ventured, with a knowing look to say—

“I ’spose I knows an orse from an alter.”

“Don’t trouble yourself about the *hal-ter*,” said Waddy, sneeringly, “that will come in due time.—But now, sir, I call upon

you to state distinctly, upon what authority are you prepared to swear to the animal's age?"

"Upon *what* authority?" said the witness, interrogatively.

"You are to reply, and not to repeat the questions put to you."

"I doesn't consider a man's bound to answer a question afore he's time to turn it in his mind."

"Nothing can be more simple, sir, than the question put. I again repeat it. Upon what authority do you swear to the animal's age?"

"The best authority," responded the groom, gruffly.

"Then why such evasion? Why not state it at once?"

"Well, then, if you must have it—"

"Must! I *will* have it!" vociferated Waddy, interrupting the witness.

"Well, then, if you must and *will* have it," rejoined the groom, with imperturbable gravity, "why then, I had it myself from the *mare's own mouth*."

A simultaneous burst of laughter rang through the Court. The Judge on the Bench could with difficulty confine his risible muscles to judicial decorum.

Although the laugh apparently told against the outwitted Waddy, still his brow-beating mode of cross-examination had won for him admirers of a certain stamp. A solicitor who appeared to have been left in some awkward dilemma, was now seen to put into his hands a brief touching a trial which was expected to succeed immediately to that in which he was then engaged.

Waddy resumed his examination of the witness.

“ You have already stated, that the rider had staked the horse. Now, sir, was not the life of the rider equally at stake?”

“ No; cos he escaped unhurt; whilst the poor mare was gored and gashed in a terrible way.”

“ Were any steps taken to save her life?”

“ No; cos, 'twas never no use.”

“ Ah, that’s a mere matter of opinion.—Did the mare suffer much ?”

“ We took good care as she shoud ’nt, poor beast !”

“ In what way ?” asked Waddy, affectedly.

“ In the only way as could put the poor creetur out o’ tortur.”

“ You appear to be the very type of humanity,” said Waddy, sarcastically ; “ but I now ask you, for the information of the gentlemen of the jury, what were the means adopted to put the poor creature out of torture ?”

“ Why, cutting her throat, to be sure.”

“ Who performed that *friendly* office ?” asked Waddy, sneeringly.

“ Who ?—why *me*, in course : who else was there to do it ?”

“ Who else was there to do it ?” echoed the lawyer. “ That will do, Mister *Cut-throat*. You may retire.”

The witness withdrew.

“ I shall not, my Lud,” said Waddy, addressing the Bench, “ protract the trial, by the

production of a single witness. I think it must be admitted, that sufficient proof has been adduced to satisfy your Ludship and the Gentlemen of the Jury, that the plaintiff owes the destruction of his own horse (a horse, by the by, upon which he could have set but little value, or he would not let it on hire,) to the officious interference, or rather let me call it cruel perversity, of his vulgar-minded menial. A barbarous act of butchery is committed by a person in the plaintiff's employ, and then, forsooth, this modest *horse*-dealer must come into a court of justice to claim remuneration for the loss he has sustained by the act of his own servant—his own servant, gentlemen.

“ My Lud, and Gentlemen of the Jury, it would be only intruding upon your valuable time to offer another word in the way of commentary upon the evidence of the last and only important witness the plaintiff has been able to produce.”

Then stating his conviction, as all counsel

do, that the jury would "find in favour of his client," Waddy, now careless of the result, sat down to pore over the pages of the brief, which but a few minutes before had been placed in his hands.

In summing up the evidence adduced, the Judge took occasion to observe, that the counsel for the defendant had stated a point well worthy the consideration of the jury.

"For if," said his Lordship, "the beast could have lived without bowels, we have a right to assume that the cutting of the animal's throat was the immediate cause of death. But on the other hand, if the animal could *not* exist without entrails, it is manifest that the secondary step of cutting the throat, was not the primary cause of loss of life."

The jury, without retiring, returned a verdict for the plaintiff, in spite of Waddy's ingenuity.

CHAPTER IX.

“Thy state of law is bond-slave to the law.”

RICHARD II.

“O, I am ignorance itself in this.”

HENRY IV.

“I will not be brow-beaten by the supercilious looks of my adversaries.”

A NEW jury was now empanneled, to try a cause, in which considerable interest had been for some time excited in the nautical neighbourhood of Blackwall.

In this case Waddy was again engaged for the defendant. Time had hardly been allowed him to obtain from his new client's attorney more than an outline of the case. But the

“glorious uncertainty of the law,” together with his own experience in “verdicts,” never would permit him to shirk an “action” upon the plea of non-preparation for battle.

Perhaps in this “Land of Liberty,” and, indeed, it might be added, of anomaly, there exists not a more glaring absurdity, than that in which an important trial at law has to be conducted, or defended, by counsel utterly ignorant of the conventional terms peculiar to the “case,” or calling of the deposing parties.

To a people constituted like the English, a people so essentially nautical, it appears to be not the least of those numerous inconsistencies which characterise our maritime policy, that the legal profession has never been able to procure an authority competent to introduce a system of study which would facilitate the practice of nautical jurisprudence.

Keen scrutiny has been exhausted, and profound treatises have been written on Medical Jurisprudence, and much good has arisen from such investigations; but our Marine interests

are exposed to all the evils which gross ignorance can entail on them in courts of law.

It is true that we have our "*Court of Admiralty*"—that "prize appeals"—piratical cases,—misdemeanours, and murders "committed on the high seas," come under the cognizance and jurisdiction of that tribunal. But in what respect are practitioners in this line of the law* more competent than other counsel to disentangle a technical doubt—to elucidate the nautical meaning of phrases, which to the uninitiated so often appear unintelligible, and to interpret to a jury of the "landed gentry," those distinctive terms, for which, with seafaring folk, synonyms are seldom, if indeed, ever sought.

It often occurs that important truths are only to be revealed through the medium of professional parlance. Nautical clients have constantly suffered, and severely too, from the egregious ignorance of over-feed counsel in ma-

* The "Elder Brethren of the Trinity house" sometimes lend their professional experience to the "Elder Sisters of the Law."

ritime matters. Gentlemen of the long-robe may deride the idea that acquaintance with nautical terms becomes a necessary knowledge in the pursuit of professional practice. But like the boatswain in "*Peter Simple*," we "beg leave to observe in the most delicate manner in the world,"—that profundity in *black-letter law* will never tell in this "right little, tight little island," like proficiency in *blue-water lore*.

It is true, that for reasons well known to the nautical community, the "sea-lawyer" meets with little of favour or affection afloat. But, on shore, let but a barrister once manifest tact and ability to comprehend and conduct a nautical case, and practice would follow fast. "A southerly wind in the *brief-bag*" would then be less prevalent in legal life. With the exception of a certain Serjeant, distinguished for his proficiency in the *tarrish tongue*,* it may be safely asserted that there is not at present a practitioner at the bar, com-

* Serjeant G———, not of the Guards.

petent to define the difference between a *splice* cut, and a *cut splice*.

But to proceed—

The Court of Common Pleas had already become redolent of pigtail and tar. Owners, part owners, pilots, shipmasters, and mates, were seen crowding in, from all quarters.

The proceedings were opened. Remuneration was sought for damage done to the plaintiff's vessel, the brig Prince of Wales, in consequence of the Lady Elizabeth, the property of the defendant, having run foul of the former when moored in the Downs.

The senior counsel, having addressed the jury in “an animated speech,” replete with the usual sophistry, the plaintiff's first witness was produced. His rough, ruddy, good-humoured countenance presented a striking contrast to the care-worn features, sallow complexions, knitted brows, sagacious and “learned” looks, which pervaded the interior of the Court.—The name of the witness had escaped the ear of the Chief Justice. It was demanded.

“ *My name, my Lord,*” answered the witness in the box—“ *my name’s James Robinson*; but for the last fourteen or fifteen years on the river, I’ve never gone by no other name nor ‘ *Jolly Jem.*’—Every man, my Lord, as wants a good pilot, always axes for ‘ *Jolly Jem.*’”

Here the counsel for the plaintiff admonished the witness in a friendly tone, concluding with a caution to be cool and collected in reply.

“ *Cool! Lord bless your heart,*” returned the witness with a smile—“ *I’m always cool. I’m* none o’ *your chicken-hearted, heave-quick sort o’ chaps as frets and funks at every hidden danger. No, no, ’tisn’t a trifle as can ruffle the temper of Jolly Jem.*”

Assuming towards his *own* witness the usual bar urbanity, the learned counsel commenced his examination in chief.

“ Where did you take charge of the Prince of Wales?”

“ At Gravesend.”

“ Did you pilot the vessel down the river?”

“ In course I did—I brought the brig to the Downs.”

“ Do you consider the Prince of Wales a manageable vessel ?”

“ Sartenly, to them as know’d how to work her.—Them as never know’d nothing of her ways, might expect she’d play ’em a slippery trick. I never, no never, seed a craft as so often reminds me of my old woman.”

“ I have little doubt, Robinson,” said the lawyer, “ of the merits of the Prince—no one, I believe, doubts that—and none whatever of the charms and perfections of your wife. But I only asked you, if the brig was a manageable vessel ?”

“ Why, I tells ye, watch her well, and coax her a bit in stays, and she behaves like a lady ; but, if ye trusts her too much to herself, and doesn’t baulk her a bit with the head-yards, she’s such a devil at shooting, I’m blest if she isn’t ashore with you afore you’ve time to turn the quid in your mouth.”

The “ Briefless ” here indulged in a smile.

“ How long have you known the Prince of Wales ?”

“ How long ?—Let’s see—I’ve had her pilotage now four years come Nowember next.”

“ Then you can safely swear, that the Prince of Wales is in every particular a well-built and desirable vessel ?”

“ A finer vessel never took the turn o’ the tide. She’s one o’ your Mugen-built* craft. She’s as sharp as a needle for’ard ; and as for her run, she’s as finely tapered abaft—as clean, ay, as clean in the counter as a Creole in the waist.”

“ Similes, my man,” said the Judge, “ are by no means necessary, in matters of testimony.”

“ You knows best, my Lord,—but you may depend on it, she’s a capital craft.”

“ Was the Prince’s position in the Downs one of perfect security ?”

“ In course, it was,—or, wherever was the use of employing a pilot?—tho’, mind you,

* Bermudian built.

'tisn't every chap as manages to muster a *branch*,* as knows every branch of his business."

"Did you take the necessary steps to prevent accident occurring at anchor?"

"Sartinly. As soon as I brings the brig up — moors with a cable each way — an open hawse, you know, to the South'ard; sees all properly stoppered for'ard; and every thing fore-and-aft as snug as a bug in a rug, in course, afore, I gives up the charge o' the craft, and looks to see as the rounding was well in the hawse, and as both cables were properly and cleverly cackled — — —"

"Pray, will you have the goodness," said the Judge, stopping the witness, "to explain, as succinctly as possible, what is meant by this *cackling* of the cables?"

"Cackling the cables, my Lord?—Why, cackling the cables is a sort o' sarvus, you see — "

"Why, I presume," said the Judge, inter-

* Branch pilot's diploma.

rupting the pilot's definition of the term, "I presume it must be of some sort of *service*, or you would not have resorted to the expedient; but pray, explain to the gentlemen of the jury the utility of this *cackling* of the cables."

"Why, I tells ye, my Lord:—Cackling's a sort o' sarvus as is clapped on the cables to prevent chafe in the hawse, cutwater, or wheresoever chafe is likely to come to a cable;—for you know, my Lord, if there's never no rounding in the hawse, or good cackling on, why then, you know ——"

"That will suffice, — you've said quite enough," said the Judge, cutting short the explanation he had himself demanded. "Explanations," added his lordship, "are seldom explanatory."

The witness was now turned over to Waddy. As in the preceding case, the deponent was cautioned to confine his testimony to truth, and not to indulge in technical jargon. "To judge from appearances," said the lawyer, turning to the jury, "those gentlemen are heartily

tired of a testimony, which, in fact, has gone to prove nothing but their patience in listening to the *cackling* of a goose."

"In matters o' truth," retorted the witness, "I wants never a lectur from no one—'tisn 't my *trade* to tortur it. *I* never bullies and badgers an unfortunet feller to lie again his nat'ral bent."

"My Lud, I claim the protection of the Court!" ejaculated Waddy, betraying no little petulance of temper.

"Protection! — Can you shew the feller o' *that*?" exclaimed the witness, pulling from his pocket a tin case, which contained his Pilot's Protection.*

The Judge expressed his "hope, that he should not be compelled to commit the witness."

"What *me*, my Lord?—commit Jolly Jem, for never committing nothing to no one? No, no, my Lord, I knows your lordship better than that."

* Pilots in the war were protected from impressment.

“ Go on, Mister Waddy,” said the Judge, testily.

Waddy proceeded.

“ You have already stated, that you moored the Prince with a cable each way. Can you enlighten the gentlemen of the jury touching this mode of mooring ?”

“ Why, the best bower, the riding bower on the flood, lay to the Sow-west ; and the small bower, the riding bower on the ebb, in course, lay to the Nor-east.”

“ I perceive,” said the lawyer, “ you mean to say, that the vessel was secured at each extremity.”

“ I never means nothing o’ the sort.”

“ Why, surely,” returned Waddy, “ North-east and South-west are the opposite points of the compass ?”

“ In course, they are.”

“ Well, then,” returned the logical lawyer, “ is it not self-evident that, if one anchor lies in the direction of the North-east, and the

other in that of the South-west, the cables attached to these anchors, placed in *opposite* points of the compass, never could meet in the same *extremity* of the vessel?"

The nautical gibes which succeeded to this geometrical interpretation, appeared to excite the displeasure of the Bench, and the more so, as the Chief Justice had already acquiesced in the *un-learned* counsel's position. "I think, Mr. Waddy," said his lordship, "much time would be saved, were you to ask the witness, whether the vessel, to employ a nautical phrase, was not moored by the *head* and *stern*?"

"What, in the *Downs*, my lord?" asked the witness, in surprize.

"Yes, in the *Downs*."

"Lord bless your lordship's lubberly heart! —ha! ha! ha!—I axes your lordship's pardon—I does, indeed, my lord—but your lordship 'oud laugh too, if your lordship only knowed but all—ha! ha! ha!"

"I think, my Lud," said Waddy, "the pre-

sent *state* of the witness demands his dismissal,—it is impossible to receive the testimony of an intoxicated man.— You may retire, sir,” added the brow-beater, turning to the witness, “ and take care how you stagger out of the Court. You have not now, recollect, a cable each way to look to for support.”

This vile aspersion failed in effect. The jury saw that Robinson was as sober as the Judge on the Bench. Jolly Jem threw a look at the lawyer, and withdrew, muttering as he left the Court,—“ I only wish that cock-eyed chap with the grizzly wig would hand the slack of his lubberly carcase without. I’m blest if I wou’d ’nt give the whole bench o’ big-wigs more fun for their money nor ever they seed at Sadler’s Wells ! ”

The mate of the Prince of Wales was the next witness produced. He deposed to the loss of the brig’s cut-water, bowsprit, and fore-mast, in consequence of the Lady Elizabeth “ driving in her hawse.”

During the examination in chief, Waddy had

noted “points” upon which he anticipated in his cross interrogation to shake the testimony of the witness. He now rose to put the mate upon his mettle—

“ You have already stated, that the wind shifted in the evening. What time did the wind shift? ”

“ The latter part of the dog-watch,” replied the witness.

“ I ask not during *which* dog’s watch it was.—My question refers to time.—What hour was it when the wind shifted? ”

“ About three bells.”

“ Three o’clock, eh? ”

“ I never said *three* o’clock,” returned the witness, marking the lawyer’s mistake.—“ I said three *bells*—half past five, in the four-to-six watch.”

“ Three bells—half past five—four-to-six,” iterated Waddy.—“ What a precise specification of time.—Well then, sir, at three bells,—how was the weather then? ”

“ Greasy looking to the Sow-west.—Sun too looked wild and watery.—Any one with half an eye could a seed a breeze was a brewin.”

“ You say the master was on shore when the accident occurred ? ”

“ He was.”

“ The charge of the vessel then devolved upon you ? ”

“ Exactly so.”

“ Was preparation made for bad weather ? ”

“ All as was necessary.”

“ Did the shifting of the wind alter the primary position of the brig ? ”

“ The wind shifted with the tide, but the brig went the wrong way.”

“ The *wrong way*, eh !—Mark that, gentlemen of the jury,” said Waddy, placing his forefinger at the side of his nasal organ, as if desirous to convey the discovery of an important point.

“ So she did,” pursued the witness—“ 'twas swinging with her stern to the West'ard as brought the elbow in the hawse.”

“ Elbow in the horse,” repeated Waddy.—“ In delivering your testimony, sir, it is not necessary to imitate the jargon of the jockey. We have had quite enough of horses and stable-yard slang to day. You are required to give your evidence in the language which the law can recognise and receive as intelligible.”

“ I delivers myself in the language of a sailor,” said the witness, sullenly,—“ it’s never no fault o’ mine, if that language is lost to the law.”

The Judge here recommended the witness to be sparing of comment.

Waddy continued to interrogate the mate.

“ When the Lady Elizabeth cast anchor, did she take up a position *properly* apart from the Prince of Wales ? ”

“ She did, but — ”

“ Come, no *buts*, sir,—answer the question direct.”

“ Well then, I says, when one takes into

account the sarcumstances as might *deceive* the best man in taking up a distance, I must say as the bark might 'ave taken up a *worse* berth."

"In what way could that deception arise?"

"Why from our buoy not watching at the time."

"The *boy* not watching at the time,—Lazy dog.—The murderer's coming out," said Waddy, exultingly; and then desiring the witness to reply direct to the next question which he was about to put to him, and, above all, to be cautious of prevarication, he thus proceeded—

"I ask you, sir, as a seaman, on your oath, would matters have gone the *wrong* way with the Prince of Wales had there been a *proper* watch upon deck?"

The absurdity of this question, added to the pompous declamatory tone in which it was delivered, excited so much of noise and mirth amongst the nautical portion of the auditory, that it became necessary to eject from Court a couple of Sunderland "skippers." Upon

the restoration of order, and the repetition of the question, the witness replied—

“There *was* a watch upon deck.”

“My Lud,” said Waddy, turning to the Bench, “this is positively the grossest case of prevarication I ever met with. Do you persist in swearing,” he continued, interrogating the witness, “that a proper watch had been on deck when the wind shifted?”

“I do,” replied the mate, in a firm and emphatic tone.

“Come you here, sir, to insult common sense? Is it possible you possess effrontery sufficient to tell those intelligent gentlemen” (pointing to the jury) “that in a vessel situated as the Prince of Wales was—bad weather coming on withal—the watch should have devolved on a dumb animal?”

The witness looked blank.

“Do you hear, sir?” vociferated the bully.

“I doesn’t understand you,” replied the defendant, with perfect composure.

•

The question was shaped anew.

“ I ask you, sir, whether it was fitting to entrust a vessel exposed to the elements, as well as to the privateers of the enemy, to the vigilance of a dumb animal — to the *watch* of a *dog* ? ”

“ There was never a dog aboard,” said the witness, bluntly.

“ And yet, Gentlemen of the Jury, the witness has had the audacity to assert upon oath, that the wind shifted, during the latter part of the *Dog’s Watch* ! ”

“ Bill, let’s bolt,” said an auditor, addressing a brother tar, in the rear of the Court. “ By the Lord Harry, there’s no standing that squinting beggar’s lubberly lip.”

The Judge had already decided that the witness was bound to state distinctly the *description* of watch which had been left upon the brig’s deck.

The witness said, “ James Thompson, my Lord, had charge of the deck during the whole

of the four-to-six watch. A better seaman never puddened an anchor, hauled out a weather earing, or took lead or helm in hand."

"Then, how comes it?" asked the lawyer of the witness, "that this superexcellent seaman was not as competent to prevent the Lady Elizabeth running aboard of the Prince as the boy of whom you so much boast? (Some *brat* of his own)," added Waddy, aside to the jury.

The witness not appearing to comprehend the question, the Judge directed Waddy to repeat it.

"I ask the witness, my Lud, if the boy whose dexterity in taking up a distance he so much extols, could have prevented the dangerous proximity of the Lady Elizabeth to the Prince of Wales—why then, I ask, as a mere matter of precaution, was *not* this matchless quick-sighted lad put upon the watch?"

The mate remained mute.

"Put it more directly, Mr. Waddy," said the Judge.

Waddy bowed to the bench.

“ Why was not the boy put upon the watch ? ”

“ Because 'twanted bleeding,” was the curt reply.

“ Had you a surgeon in the ship ? ”

At this question, the assumed gravity of the witness was put to the test. It was with difficulty he could refrain from laughing aloud—he, however, answered in the negative.

“ No surgeon in the ship ? ”

“ Sartinly not.”

“ Then how, sir, can you take upon yourself to give an opinion upon a medical point ? Pray, sir, have you made physic as well as seamanship a study ? ”

“ I can't abide physic—never took a dose in my life.”

“ Then upon what grounds do you assert that the boy wanted bleeding ? ”

“ Cause 'twas full o' water.”

“ Gracious heaven ! ” exclaimed Waddy, with

extended arms—"was ever greater ignorance betrayed. My Lud, the jury never can receive such testimony. Whoever heard of resorting to depletion in a dropsical case?"

"I say it again," rejoined the witness, looking at Waddy full in the face, "the buoy wanted *tapping*."^{*}

"Never, never, was there an instance of grosser prevarication! Note this, gentlemen of the jury, he first swears that the boy wanted *bleeding*, and now that he finds himself in error, he turns from the operation of bleeding to that of tapping!"

"Well, I says so still—bleeding's just as proper a term as tapping—take the turns out of that if you can," said the mate, in a tone of defiance.

"I can't suffer you, my man, to be insolent

* Tapping and bleeding are the terms nautically employed when directions are given to clear the buoys of the water which enters them by leakage. Unless the buoys undergo this operation they sink, and no longer "watch" or point out the direction of the anchor.

to counsel," said the Judge, addressing the witness in a peremptory tone.

"I'm not insolent, my Lord; but where's the man, my Lord, as can bear to be bullied and badgered by a lubberly lawyer as doesn't know the main-brace from the captain's breeches."

This burst of offended feeling excited in the Court a sensation not to be described. The sons of the sea were seen rubbing their huge hands with glee and delight, whilst expressions of surprise and scowls of indignation betrayed themselves in the tell-tale features of the Members of the Bar.

It was a maxim with the "Learned Judge" on the Bench, that "in law, truth was restricted to certain limitations; for, though a witness was bound on oath to 'declare the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,' touching the case under trial, still, no deponent in open Court could with impunity *perpetrate a truth to the prejudice of counsel.*'"

Upon this principle, the Judge now interposed his authority.

“Counsel,” said his lordship, addressing the witness, in a grave and sonorous tone, “may sometimes, when heated in argument, or excited in their client’s cause, appear to wound the feelings of an unwilling witness; but still the sanctity of truth is not to be abused, for the unbecoming purpose of indulging in personal retort.”

The monitory remarks of the learned Judge were not always characterised for singleness of purpose. “Double-headed hitters” were often discharged from the Bench, regardless whether friend or foe suffered from the fire. And so it was in this instance. The broadside from the Bench had done more mischief to the man with the wig than to the man with the tail; whilst the former felt wounded to the quick, the latter was not aware he had been even hit, until the Judge had ordered him to be taken into custody, and committed to Bridewell, for contempt of Court.

At the intercession, however, of the plaintiff's counsel, the Court was induced to rescind its sentence, and the witness, with a warning admonition, was permitted to withdraw.

The trial proceeded. Waddy's statement for the defence, had already rendered "confusion worse confounded." By the bungling of counsel on both sides, the witnesses examined and cross-examined had it all their own way. The deponents in support of the defence one and all attested that the accident was entirely attributable to the sudden change of wind, which, terminating in a heavy gust, caused the bark to "drag her anchor, and eventually to fall foul of the hawse of the Prince of Wales."

The plaintiff's counsel "spoke to evidence," —and spoke to little purpose. The Judge "summed up"—charged—and discharged an infinite deal of nothing, in laying down "the law of the Land," which, of course, had little to say to the case of the *Sea*; and the Jury,

more by good luck than good management, returned a verdict consistent with common sense; and, to the great delight of Waddy,—“ found for the defendant.”

CHAPTER X.

“ Promise—large promise—is the soul of an advertisement.”

IDLER.

“ Arm me, audacity, from head to foot.”

SHAKSPEARE.

“ *SECOND* edition of the *Currier*—Grand royal—News, news!—*Second* edition—His Majesty’s—*Second* edition—Fleet at Portsmouth;—the King—Glorious news—our brave—*Currier*—*Currier*—*second* edition.”

These fragmentary announcements were bawled by half a dozen Stentorian-lunged fellows in Pall Mall, who kept close together, in

order that no one should, by any possibility, catch the purport of the news which their papers contained, but which they seemed generously disposed to proclaim without fee or reward; only, as soon as one bawler was coming to the marrow of the subject, another struck up in a different key and louder voice, so as to drown effectually the sequence of his predecessor's cry; and so on through the whole gang, who conspired, by what a musician would call a fugue in their vocal parts, to prevent any passenger knowing a word of the news, unless, indeed, he chose to buy a paper at an exorbitant price.

Our friend Waddy, who happened that evening to be walking westward, was sauntering along the shady side of Pall Mall, indolently resigning himself to his contemplations and to the tyranny of the summer heat, which, though the sun, like himself, was pacing to the Occident, still maintained a melting power.

In the midst of a flattering reverie, and when he thought he had hit on a scheme, which,

by the united aid of Venus and of Plutus, would place him in luxury for the rest of his life, the evening newsmen already alluded to scattered, with their ear-splitting horns and stunning voices, the whole train of his meditations, and directed his thoughts to the matters of public import revealed in the “Second edition of the *Currier*.”

Waddy was too much of a London peripatetic to hope to gain from the criers the *name* even of the subject of their news; so he wisely gave fifteenpence for a paper, and withdrew to a neighbouring coffee-house to save his ears, and to enjoy at his ease the intelligence conveyed by the journal. This consisted in a detailed account of the visit made by the King (George the Third) to Lord Howe’s fleet at Portsmouth, on its return from the glorious action of the “*First of June*,” 1794.

Although Waddy had read with the most patriotic interest the narrative of the Royal visit to the victorious fleet—and, although he felt “proud,” as the song used to say, that he

was a “Briton,” still, truth compels us to state that all the glorious particulars relative to the meeting of His Majesty and Lord Howe, sank into utter insignificance before the attractions of a little advertisement in the first, and, generally speaking, most uninteresting page of the paper.—It was, in short, a matrimonial invitation, and ran as follows :

“ MATRIMONIAL ALLIANCE — DELICATE
AND CONFIDENTIAL.

“ A gentleman of gentlemanly means, or a gentleman of a gentlemanly profession, desirous of securing to himself a nuptial partner, suited to the middle age, may, through the instrumentality of a confidential party, be spared much of the inconvenience, anxieties, and doubts, consequent upon protracted courtship. As the advertiser can ensure a comfortable competency, it is requested that no idle curiosity will prompt suitors to seek communications not founded upon the basis of honour and the strictest secrecy.

“ N. B. Written overtures will be of no avail.

The card of the suitor, sent under cover to P. F., 15, Surrey-street, Strand, will meet with due attention."

This singularly worded advertisement was read by Waddy again and again. On perusing it for a fifth time, with a view to determine in his mind as to whether the *affiche* was written in good faith, or was merely a vulgar "hoax," he came to the conclusion, that it was a genuine invitation for a husband.

"‘‘ Spared much of the inconveniences, anxieties, and doubts consequent upon a protracted courtship.’ Capital! Singular unity of sentiment! My own identical thoughts. ‘Through the instrumentality of a confidential party.’ Evidently an accredited agent. Well, no objection to a third party—spare one much of beating about the bush, and of tiresome and nonsensical inuendo. Not that there was too much of *that* with the widow; yet, must say, she was not sufficiently frank—can’t but think her humility was feigned; but never mind, she’s now no more, poor soul! ‘Comfortable

competency.' Cream of the matter! 'No idle curiosity—honour and the strictest secrecy.' Cautious, and evincing worldly wisdom! There *must* be something in this—no harm to try."

And so, concluding this iteration of disjointed sentences, Waddy came to the determination to inclose his card, urging, at the same time, an early interview with the advertiser.

The suitor's communication was despatched by a special messenger, and on the following afternoon, an answer was received, appointing an interview.

Waddy had remained at home the entire of the day, and was walking up and down his chamber in a meditative mood, when the two-penny-post man delivered to him the expected reply.

"Come, this really looks like business," said the lawyer, reading the advertiser's "private and confidential" epistle. "From eight to nine, eh! Well, much may be done in an hour."

And even while St. Clement's clock was striking the eighth hour, Waddy was seen

knocking at the street door of No. 17, Surrey-street, Strand.

The rat-tat-tat of the little lawyer was answered by a squat, greasy-faced female, in a dirty drab gown and blue apron,—a sorry ambassador to the court of Cupid. To this interesting female, as the police reporters would have dubbed her, Waddy presented his card, which the lady cautiously declined, until her apron had received the impress of her delicate digits. Then scanning the barrister's "ticket," as she termed it, and pronouncing it as "all right," she forthwith conducted the suitor to the back parlour, honoured by the occupancy of P. F.

As Waddy and his card were unceremoniously ushered at one and the same moment into the mysterious presence of the marital agent, the latter, glancing at the name of the visitor, seemed, for a brief space, to be so embarrassed, that our lawyer, ever ready to give an unfavourable meaning to the least symptom of confusion, suspected that all was not exactly

right on the part of P. F. Notwithstanding his professions in the advertisement, the lurking doubt was increased by the sinister air with which the stranger glanced over his figure. Here then, before a word was spoken, did Waddy's confidence in the "confidential party" receive a check.

Waddy was the first to break silence.

"Pray, sir," said he, handing to the stranger the cover which contained the communication, appointing the then interview,—"Pray, sir, may I ask, are *you* the writer of the invitation which that cover had inclosed?"

"I am, sir."

"Then, I presume, sir," rejoined the lawyer, in a nervous and hesitating tone, unwonted in Waddy, "I am now addressing *the* P. F.; that is—*the*—the confidential party entrusted to—a—conduct this secret—and—a—delicate affair."

"I am that same, sir,—authorised and prepared to receive or reject such proposals which shooters (suitors) may be disposed to offer in

this strictly secret and truly honourable transaction; and, moreover, sir, ready to give any real gentleman every *satisfaction* which reason and honour may demand."

The broad Irish accent in which the speaker proclaimed himself as the accredited "crimp" in this "man-hunting" matter, added to the emphatic expression of his readiness to afford to gentlemen the fullest "*satisfaction*," (a phrase which coming from Milesian lips, Waddy from experience was convinced admitted but one construction,) had aroused feelings and associations ill-suited to the discussion of the tender theme.

A pause for some seconds ensued. To employ a phrase of the Fancy, "Waddy was all abroad."

Hume says, "Nothing carries man through the world like a true genuine natural impudence. Its counterfeit is good for nothing, nor can ever support itself."

In this instance the words of the essayist were verified. Native impudence now befriended

the “ crimp,” who, approaching the person of the suitor, and for the first time offering him a chair, thus said—

“ Hadn’t you better be sated, sir. May be, it isn’t well you are? Perhaps the hate of the day’s got hould of your head?”

Waddy, thanking the stranger, said he was perfectly well—adding that his meditations had suggested the propriety of “ staying proceedings.”

“ Oh! you can stay as long as you like, sir, and take what proceedings you plase, so that it’s on honourable business you’re raelly bint.”

“ I fear, sir,” said Waddy, “ you misunderstood me.”

“ Not at all, sir.”

“ I beg your pardon, sir,” rejoined the lawyer—“ by ‘ staying proceedings,’ I mean, stopping short, or, to be more explicit, advancing no further in this delicate affair.”

“ What for, sir?”

Waddy was dumb.

“ What for, counsellor? Sure, it isn’t an impostur you’re after taking me for?”

“ On the contrary, sir,” replied the retreating suitor—“ your reception of me is quite sufficient to warrant the opposite conclusion; for, to be candid with you, your *manner*—(I may be mistaken, sir—you are to me a total stranger; indeed your very name is to me unknown)—but still your manner, certainly induces the suspicion that I am not exactly the description of suitor sought.”

“ Oh! in these matters, sir, you mustn’t mind *manner*—*manner*’s mighty deceaving, but, the fact is—(for it isn’t in me to conceal the truth)—I *was* a little bit taken by surprise. My ‘mind’s-eye,’ as Othello says, pictured Counsellor Waddy a different sort of person entirely—quite entirely. People, you know, Counsellor, often picture to themselves, fatures and forms very opposite to the rael life. Come, sir, be sated. What’ll you take, Counsellor? tay, or stronger drink?”

And without waiting a reply, he opened the parlour door, bellowing to the servant below in the kitchen—"Marthar! Marthar! bring tay, for two, in a brace o' cracks ;" and then subduing his voice, thus soliloquised—

"Well, well, what a deceaving squint. The murderer's out:—'faith, she put her fut in it. No matter, the business has blown over; and its purty plain, he now knowed nothing of me."

Re-entering the room, drawing a chair, seating himself beside the Barrister, and prefacing his words with a familiar slap on the shoulder, he said, "Come, Counsellor, I'm glad to *par-ceive*, you seem inclined to listen to *rason*."

The familiar tap on Waddy's shoulder was returned with a stare of surprise.

"You mustn't mind me, sir. I see, I have a jintleman to dale with. I never can disguise my feelings in company with a rael jintleman; and it's only the like of such as ever *will* listen to *rason*."

"Why, sir, I am free to confess," said

Waddy, “ that the tone and tenor of the advertisement is to me peculiarly inviting, because I have ever held, what the advertiser so properly terms, ‘ protracted courtship,’ in utter abhorrence. Indeed, of all absurdities, there is none, which, in my mind, exceeds that of people retarding the avowal of their sentiments, their affections, and honourable intentions.”

“ Mighty absurd, indeed, Counsellor,” interrupted his companion.

“ And bringing upon themselves,” continued Waddy, “ all those distressing doubts and embarrassing abominations incidental to ordinary dalliance.”

Tea being now discussed, the Counsellor proceeded to open his case, to prove his title to become a candidate for the lady’s hand, and ultimately to tender what he termed his “ conditional proposals.”

As far as his client was concerned, the matrimonial attorney (for he could hardly come under the denomination of an Amatory Agent) was ready to accept the terms of the suitor;

but there were other considerations, such as *douceurs*, and “fees of office,” which, as they were to be paid previously to the publication of the banns, sadly obstructed the completion of the “definitive treaty.” The Barrister, however, insisting upon “taxing the attorney’s costs,” the latter succumbed, and the Counsellor, receiving an assurance that he should soon hear from the “confidential party,” retired, exclaiming, when he reached the street—

“ Come, that’s a very different sort of fellow, from the bullying blackguard that bore his countryman’s challenge.”

CHAPTER XI.

“Then she plots, then she ruminates, then she devises.”
MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

DOUBTLESS, the reader has already suspected that our matrimonial agent was no other than that valorous redresser of the wrongs, and asserter of the rights of women—Mr. Phelan O’Finn. The occupation of a knight-errant, ought, even in these commercial and unromantic days, to ensure to its possessor the respect and support of mankind at large; but alas! for O’Finn, those vulgar “purveyors” to our necessities, the tailors, butchers, and

bakers, failed to recognise the claims of our *preux-chevalier*, especially, after the failure of the house in which his leisure hours was occupied in the capacity of cashier. The ingratitude of the world sank deeply into the heart of O'Finn. He could have borne with patience the inconvenience of an empty stomach, and the reproach of a thread-bare coat; but the general insensibility to his lofty qualities went nigh to inspire him with misanthropy. It was hard, indeed, that the champion of "the sex" should, four days out of seven, go without dinner.

It was in this disagreeable state of affairs, that, happening one day to call on his female cousin, whose cause he had so heroically defended, O'Finn found that lady in an unusual state of exaltation. At first, Phelan imagined that this arose from a secret consciousness on her part, that the larder, by some unusual and happy conjuncture of circumstances, was in a flattering state; for, owing to a late series of privations, it must be confessed that O'Finn's

most prominent thoughts ran on the subject of refection.

Whilst, however, O'Finn was revelling in all sorts of blissful anticipations of dinner, which now, in addition to its usual charms, added the attraction of novelty, the lady, without dispelling his gastronomic dreams, unfolded to him the following scheme, which bade fair to ensure him a “bright reversion” of repasts.

“Phelan,” proceeded the ‘Schemer,’ “for these three weeks past, my thoughts have been busily engaged in the plotting of a scheme, which, for your sake, I am now happy to say, is thoroughly matured—I say matured, because it has already receaved the sanction of the person whom it more immadiately concerns.”

O'Finn smiled.

“Phelan, it's not joking, I am—I'm perfectly sarious, and therefore it is, that you must now sit down, and lend me for a few minutes an attentive ear; for, in no other way can I see the slightest prospect of alleviating your present distress.”

It may be here necessary to apprise the reader, that, for reasons connected with Mrs. Hunter's death, added to the position in which she felt herself, from the circumstances relative to the intended duel being so generally known, the "fair penitent" had quitted her former quarters, and was then the occupant of humble apartments in a street contiguous to that in which lodged her "distressed" relation.

The cousins had already seated themselves on a parlour couch, which was rather the worse for wear. O'Finn was all attention, although, from a sort of anxious excitement, as the lady proceeded to develope her views, the fingers of his dexter hand appeared to be at open war with the matted horse-hair which was straggling from the ragged rents in the sacking of his seat.

"Well, you must know, Phelan, since the death of our ever to be lamented friend—our poor dear darling Mrs. Hunter, I became accidentally acquainted (let me see, 'twas precisely two days before I left Mrs. Martin's) with a

certain Miss Tomlinson—a lady possessing, to be sure, no great personal attraction—but 'faith ! Phelan, something better ; some eight or nine hundred a year."

O'Finn, in ecstacy, started from his seat.

" Asy now, Phelan ! 'Tisn't *that* I mane at-all at-all ; she's beyond your *raach* entirely. So think no more of that."

Phelan thought much of "*that*!"

" Well, determined to sift her sentiments upon a certain subject, which I soon saw engrossed all her thoughts, I took occasion one evening that I *tayed* with her, the two of us *teat-a-teat*, all alone to ourselves, to drop a few delicate hints regarding her solitary state. 'A forlorn female,' said I, ' was rather a poor protector to a fortune of eight or nine hundred a year ?— ' Well,' said she, ' I can't for the life of me, Miss Moore, comprehend your maning at-all, at-all ? My maning, Phelan, was plain enough. ' You Hyrish,' said she, (for it's she that *raelly* aitches it in illegant style,) ' you Hyrish are so singular —so very *hodd*.?— ' If to be *single* is to be singular,' says I, dropping another delicate hint,

‘then *odd* as I am, I’m *even* with you.’—
‘Oh! indeed, Miss Moore,’ said she, ‘you’re
really and truly too witty entirely for me.’—
‘Pardon me,’ said I, ‘I’ve no pretensions to
wit, though I hope, I’ve always my *wits* about
me. By the exhibition of the one,’ said I,
(determined to shew her I was something
more than a mere tay-table talker,) ‘enemies
are often made, whilst by the exercise of the
other, you may secure friends and some so-
ciety.’

‘Here I had her, Phelan; for with Miss T.
I can tell you, society was a sore subject. In-
deed she herself almost admitted as much.
‘From becoming,’ said she, ‘a *Horphan* early
in life’ (for between ourselves her father was
nothing more than a rich rag-merchant in the
city)—‘I may almost say,’ said she, lowering
her voice, ‘I’ve been shut out from all so-
ciety.’—‘The greater necessity,’ says I, drop-
ping another delicate hint, ‘for trying to pro-
secute your purpose through other channels.

Selection,' says I, 'may be made through readier manes. By proper management, and observing a delicate and becoming caution, I 'm positive,' said I, 'that in three weeks, or a month, at most, it 's an elegant and every way desirable match may be readily made.'— 'Ah ! that 's *as*ier said than done,' said she. 'And as *asy done* as said,' said I.

"Well, to make a long story short, after exhausting all my powers of persuasion, and 'faith, Phelan, putting my patience not a little to the test, (for at times she 's very dictatorial and touchy in her timper) my lady consents to make trial of the proposed schame. It was this :

"First of all, a delicate and well-pinned advertisement, under the *head of* 'MATRIMONIAL ALLIANCE,' was to be drawn up by me for my lady's approval. Then was to be secured the services of a confidential person, who was to act as agent in the business, and to undertake the entire management of the matter. Upon

him was to devolve all the delicate duties of seeing suitors, receiving proposals, and of making all the nice and necessary inquiries regarding character, connexion, fortune, and the like."

"No small undertaking," said O'Finn.

"By no manes—and there it is that I think I made the most of it. Well, as the nomination of this confidential agent was given to me—of course, anticipating your readiness and willingness to do something in the way of turning an honest penny—I at once proposed *you* as the fittest person to act in an affair, in which, as I told her, so much of delicacy and discrimination were to be exercised;—when, becoming sponsor for your *zale*, discretion, secrecy, and trust, I, in return, Phelan, received *that*" (handing him a ten-pound note) "by way of a retaining fee."

At the unexpected production of the tempting fee, O'Finn became half frantic with joy. He sprang from his seat—ran round the room, rubbing his hands,—swearing, by all the saints

in the calendar, that his cousin was the cleverest woman in the world.

But as the cleverest woman in the world had always her wits about her, she dropped the delicate hint, that to qualify for office it would be necessary for Phelan to provide himself with a suitable suit.

The “schemer’s” hint,—the agent’s departure,—and the tailor’s measure, were severally taken in rapid succession, and on the following evening O’Finn found himself in the full possession of place, power, and a suit in its newest gloss.

If, in the fulfilment of his functions, effrontery (a quality which, in office, often supplies the place of efficiency) had been the only essential required, few, who knew him, would have refused to O’Finn his full title to place. But, in the discharge of duties incidental to a calling in which were reposed so much of confidence, discretion, and trust, it must be admitted that the Milesian placeman was not altogether the most fitted for office. The fact

is, in O'Finn's vocabulary, the word fidelity was not to be found, and those of secrecy and self were set down as synonymous terms.

Although Waddy had been the only individual who had responded to the nuptial invitation, yet, in returning his "periodical reports," O'Finn had given to his too credulous client, the most solemn assurance, that "out of the many applicants who had aspired to the honour of her hand, the counsellor was the only candidate whom he could safely and conscientiously recommend as worthy of her favourable attention.

"It was true," he said, in making his last report (and, indeed, he considered it much in his favour), "that in his dress the counsellor was anything but a fashionable fop. He wore his hair, perhaps, a little too long ;—nor had he what young boarding-school misses would call a soft-fatured face. Not *he*, indeed ! His countenance was the countenance of a manly mind—a face fit for a counsellor ; and though he *had* a slight slant in his right eye, there was

nothing wrong in it. People, to be sure, who couldn't see straight themselves, might miscall it a 'cast;' but those who knew anything of eyes, and particularly the eyes of *men*—accompanying his words with a suitable leer, would at once say that the counsellor's look was the very *look* which ladies, they say, so much admire. Then take his *grate* respectability, and his *grater* business at the bar. In cross-examination he carries all before him—ay—could even bate bully Egan* of Dublin *clane* out of the field. But he seems in a mighty *grate* hurry to bring matters to a close; and, to tell you the truth, Miss Tomlinson, I'm thinking it won't do to defer further the conference he presses."

Nor was Waddy the less deluded: in a similar tone of exaggerated colouring was depicted the sundry charms and accomplishments of the speculative fair. At his second interview with O'Finn, the lawyer was informed that "*shooters*" were tumbling in fast; that

* A celebrated barrister of Dublin.

there were rivals already in the field ; but that, to secure the prize (for such she would prove to him who could appreciate her worth), it only became necessary to sign and seal *that* ;" which, being no other than a written compact that had been discussed on a former occasion, was accordingly signed by Waddy, who was then permitted to consider himself as the accepted suitor.

CHAPTER XII.

————— “Thus with stealthy pace,
With Tarquin’s ravishing strides, towards his design
Moves like a ghost.” MACBETH.

THERE are, no doubt, still living many persons who recollect the great and destructive storm of July 6th, 1794: except in the tropics, more vivid and fearful flashes of lightning, or more tremendous claps of thunder, were never heard, than on that memorable occasion.

In the parlour of an old house, close to the village of Willesden, about five miles from London, sate on this dreadful evening, the

lady whom we have already introduced to the reader as the friend of the late Mrs. Hunter. The mien and deportment of Mrs. Darcy, for such was her name, accorded but too well with the dolorous aspect of all without; for, long ere the storm burst, the whole country had suffered an unnatural darkness, and seemed "hushed in grim repose." The very house, which, under the cheering sun-light, might have seemed pleasant and romantic enough, was little calculated to dispel the gloom arising from external causes. Its building was of an old date (there is always something of sadness in the character and decoration of an old edifice); the rooms were wainscoted; the casements hung heavily and loosely in their frames; the furniture, which had not been renewed since the time of Queen Anne, was formal and clumsy; and the ceilings, even of the best rooms, were intersected with beams of massive timber. The approach to the outer door (for the house was situated in the midst of a large garden), ran

through an avenue of reverend elms well tenanted with rooks, whose measured cawing made but tristful music.

It was between eight and nine o'clock in the evening, when the ominous silence, which for the preceding hour had been brooding over the land, was disturbed by the heavy sighing of the wind, which seemed to raise its voice at intervals into sudden gusts, as if the air was instinct with passion, and then to subside into its former low monotony. As the intermittent gleams of the setting sun faded away, masses of black and sulphureous clouds gathered in the horizon, precluding the sweet intervention of twilight, and, gradually spreading upwards, hid the stars, and rendered with their pall-like drapery the darkness more dense and forlorn.

The moaning blast still continued; but it brought no perception of freshness upon the senses, which were oppressed by a certain humidity in the air, such as sometimes betokens the coming on of a storm. This, indeed, soon began in large and heavy drops, followed

by a deluging descent of rain, accompanied by flashes of forked lightning, and peals of stunning thunder. It was indeed a fearful night, and its horrors were acutely felt by the companionless tenant of the old house at Willesden ;—we say “companionless,” for the sleeping child in the cradle at her side scarcely mitigated the feeling of solitude.

A book lay open before Mrs. Darcy ; but this was no time for the calm pleasures of intellect: if the imagination, even of the happiest, would have been scared by the wild tempest then raging, how much more was the hurricane calculated to terrify the lonely watcher for a husband’s return, who, moreover, knew that that husband was exposed to the fury of the elements ?

Still the lightning flashed, the thunder ever and anon seemed to smite the house-top, and the rain beat against the windows in sharp drops, varied occasionally by a driving sheet of water, as the fitful gust swelled into strength. These sounds seemed to attract and monopo-

lize the whole attention of the solitary being, as if the storm had some strange influence over her destiny.

Hour after hour wore away, and with their progress the anxiety of the lonely watcher increased. She listened intently to the external sounds, not alone to ascertain the progress of the storm, but as though her quick ear longed to detect those footsteps which were to be the harbingers of peace.

But no sounds like these greeted her ear. Nothing was audible except, as before, the uproar of the elements, which, however, after a time, seemed to be gradually decreasing. The rain became less sharp in its descent, and at length faded off into drops falling at momentary intervals ; and then, ceasing altogether, gave place to a dead quiet.

“ Still he comes not ! ” exclaimed Mrs. Darcy ; “ something must have befallen him ! My brain maddens to think of it ! Gracious God ! can it be possible ? Have I suffered all that has lately assailed me, and must a misery so

terrible as that I now dread be reserved to plunge me into utter despair ? He would not, I am sure, put me to this agony, were he—— I dare not entertain the thought, which night and the present silence and solitude engender. I have no one to comfort me—nothing to beat back the hideous fancies by which I am assailed. Let me think my fears are groundless—he is safe—he is coming—I am foolishly timid. And yet, he assured me, that nothing should detain him after nine ; and it is now beyond eleven o'clock. Hark ! no, it was but the rattling of the great tree against the gable. I ought to have insisted on accompanying him to town ; and yet he would not hear of it, because, as he said, his political engagements required him to be perfectly alone, and my child ought not to be left to the care of a mere hireling. Alas ! that ‘party’ should for an instant separate us ! Since the death of poor Mrs. Hunter I have no female friend to break in on my solitude, and sympathise with me on account of the danger in which I fear my hus-

band's political principles involve him. Had that excellent woman lived, I should not have been thus alone, and thus distracted by my fears; for her cheerful voice was ever ready to divert and console me. But now, lonely as I am in this old house, and amidst this dismal midnight silence, I almost faint with dread, so many fancies torment me."

Such were the thoughts of the afflicted lady, as she paced up and down the parlour of the village house; her fears increasing the more she gave place to them in her bosom.

It is wonderful how ingenious we are in tormenting ourselves. A thought which, on its first admission to our minds, may be but slightly unpleasant, gradually assumes an all-absorbing and overpowering strength, the longer we give it entertainment. This is your only true and irresistible *crescendo*.

Thus perplexed, our poor recluse was beset by that restlessness which those only can understand who have been scared by the prospect of some imminent and frightful danger.

She was without the power of remaining still one instant; and, at length, the monotonous silence of the room becoming intolerable, the forlorn woman sought from without that appearance of life which nature, even under the most unfavourable aspects, never fails to present; and accordingly, having ascertained that the slumber of the child continued sound, she paced along the moist gravel walk, underneath the dripping branches of the old avenue of elms, and at length reached the by-road, on the line of which the house stood.

And here an exquisite contrast was presented to the melancholy of the room just left by the lady. The storm had altogether passed away. The moon had just shewn itself over the rim of the horizon, pouring from its great disk a broad and level stream of light over the sleeping landscape. In front of the lady, as she stood in the silent scene, lay a wide expanse of meadow, intersected by hedge-rows of varied outline, caused by the intervention here and there of little trees. As the moon increased its

altitude in the heavens, and gave stronger light, the distant features of the picture became more visible, not indeed in detail, but in broad masses. For example, as the spectator turned to the right, the noble eminence called Barn's hill became plainly discernible, steeped in the witching hues of moonlight, and invested with a feeling of romance beyond what it might fairly claim (beautiful as the view is) when seen by the broad light of day :

“ ‘Tis as a pleasant land by moonlight seen,
Where each harsh form that met the day
In darkness dies away ;
Smooth gleams and tender shadows steal between,
While the pale silvery orb glides peaceful o'er the
scene.” *

For a little space, the poor lady drank comfort from the calm aspect of the scene before her ; but the feeling was only of short duration ; for, again gathering force from the slight interval of relief, her bosom was once more smitten by dismal apprehension for the fate of him for whose return she waited.

* Sotheby.

A little beyond the outer gate of the house was a sharp turn in the lane by which it was approached. To this point she resolved to go, in order that she might glance along its range with a kind of despairing hope (if such a paradox may be allowed) of perceiving the figure of her husband. The lane, after turning the corner, presents to the view a long straight vista, and the heart of Mrs. Darcy beat with a sudden tumultuous throb, at perceiving in the middle distance of the perspective a man's figure.

“ ‘Tis he, ‘tis he !” she exclaimed, “ God be praised !”

Her first impulse was to rush toward the person ; but she checked herself, on a second glance, at perceiving that he sauntered along the lane, with slow and hesitating step. Such would not be the way in which her husband would approach her. Again, regarding the figure, she became convinced that the person she now looked at was shorter than her husband ; and not altogether liking the appearance

of a man lurking about in that lonely spot, she withdrew into the house, and fastened the door.

It was now upwards of an hour after midnight. Vain would it be to attempt any description of the lady's feelings, as the fear she had already conceived grew into conviction. Her heart beat audibly against her side, and every sense became painfully acute.

While in this state of almost preternatural excitement, the dead quiet of the hour was suddenly startled by the report of a pistol. To dart towards the window and unfasten the shutters, that she might look out, was the work of an instant; and, as she folded them back, her eyes fell on the figure of a man looking in upon her, masked in the upper part of his face, though not so completely as to conceal a certain malevolent exultation which played about his mouth.

This was indeed a trying and a terrific moment; but Mrs. Darcy did not scream, nor faint, but, with the steadiness of despair, re-

turned face to face the fixed gaze of the rufian.

Neither of the parties uttered a word, and the lady, so petrified and amazed was she, might have remained for some minutes at the window, motionless as a statue, had not the masked intruder suddenly retreated from the garden to the road.

She now breathed again ; but, as persons who in passing through a frightful ordeal keep up their energy till it is over, and then give way, so did Mrs. Darcy. Her hand, which a minute since had been steady as fate, now trembled so that she could scarcely close the shutter she had opened. Her limbs almost failed her ; but she had still strength enough to stagger to the room of her female servant, whom she shook, as she lay in bed, till the girl awoke. The maid opened her eyes, and seeing her mistress standing by her side with a face transformed by terror, and seemingly incapable of uttering a word, gave a loud

shriek, and buried herself under the bed-clothes.

“ Why Anne ! Anne !” at length ejaculated the forlorn mistress, “ do *you* desert me ? Never had woman more need of aid than I—for shame ! arouse yourself—I tell you that a ruffian is lurking in the garden, and I fear me there has been murder. Get up—get up—and let us go into the village for assistance. Come —quick—get up—bear me company, or, as I am resolved to know the worst, I will go forth by myself and leave you here alone.”

“ Don’t stir, ma’am, for heaven’s sake don’t attempt to leave the house,” replied the agitated girl. “ What ! face a robber in the garden ! No, not for all the world—he’d murder us both—I know he would. Murder !—murder !—thieves ! Call murder, ma’am—do—do, ma’am. Murder !—fire !—murder !” roared the panic-stricken maid.

“ Silence !” exclaimed the mistress, “ you are only hurrying on our fate. There, crouch

beneath the blankets, if you think they can protect you ; for myself I shall adopt other measures."

And so saying the mother, taking her child in her arms, stole with noiseless steps out of the house, passed through the garden without molestation, and, having reached the outer gate, beheld a sight that withered all her faculties. The body of a man lay on the ground steeped in his blood ; and standing over him was seen by the light of the moon the masked villain who had presented himself, a few minutes before, at the window, and who, now discovering Mrs. Darcy, pointed to the corpse, and exclaimed, in a tone of mad exultation, "There !—there !"

Having said this, he rapidly retreated, and was soon lost in the distance.

In the paroxysm of dismay into which the poor lady was now thrown, she gazed wildly around her : steps were heard again approaching the house ; but she was now beyond all fear—one terrible idea monopolized her mind.

Was the dead man lying before her her husband? Every feeling of her own danger fled before this one awful surmise. But had she not been thus rendered callous to dread, fear would have been vain, for protection was at hand. The patrol of the neighbourhood, having heard, from some distance, the report of a pistol, hastened to the spot, and came up soon after the unknown assassin had fled.

The perfect self-possession—the utter absence of active sympathy with sufferers,—and the business-like manner in which these men discharge their vocation, however unfeeling such qualities may at first sight appear to be, are not without their advantage. In proportion as their emotions are not aroused, their discretion is the more alert, and our patrol had no sooner arrived at the scene of action than he proceeded to unmask his dark lantern, and to cast its light on the murdered man, who lay with his face to the ground.

Turning the body over, with a design of identifying it, a ghastly sight was presented to

the two silent observers of the scene. The assassin's pistol had been discharged full in the countenance of the victim, and had totally obliterated its lineaments. But though the chief mark of identity was thus destroyed, the quick eye of the wife at once detected in the clothes of the slaughtered man, the dress of him for whom she had watched. Uttering one piercing shriek she fell with her child in her arms upon the body, and exclaiming—“My husband! O! my husband!” became as lifeless to all appearance as the unconscious and bleeding mass upon which she had prostrated herself.

The child, bathed in the blood of the murdered man, was snatched from the miserable group by one of the bystanders, who by this time had assembled from the village. Two others bore the insensible lady into the house, and consigned her to the care of the servant girl, who by this time had been aroused from her disgraceful fear.

Medical aid was promptly sought. Mrs.

Darcy was restored to consciousness only to fall into a delirious fever, in which she continued for some time, her life being in imminent danger.

Meanwhile, the coroner's inquest was held on the body of the murdered man. Nothing transpired in the slight evidence to throw a light on the transaction, and the Jury, after a patient investigation, could return no other verdict than "Wilful Murder against some person or persons unknown."

CHAPTER XIII.

“ Quoth he, in all my past adventures,
I ne’er was set so on the tenters ;
Or taken tardy with dilemma,
That ev’ry way I turn does hem me.”

HUDIERAS.

FROM the solitary aspect of the country, let us pass at once into the noise and turmoil of town. From Mrs. Darcy and her despair, we now return to Waddy and his hope.

The day fixed for the first meeting of the “contracting couple,” as officially styled by the accredited agent, had now arrived. The “*venue*,” as the lawyer termed it, was to be “laid” at the dwelling of the lady. At

the suggestion of Waddy, who was bent upon the “dispatch of business,” it had been previously stipulated, that the ceremony of introduction, and the presence of confidential friends were to be dispensed with—formalities and courtesies being considered by the suitor as stumbling blocks in the way of prompt proposal.

Although it was a “*dies non*” legally speaking, it was by no means with Waddy a day of rest. At the early hour of nine the tailor had “*non suited*” the lawyer, and a motion for a “new trial” was to be made at noon. To speak plainly, Snip has misfitted his man, and therefore, to make the *amende*, and appease his too irritable customer, the tailor undertook that the barrister’s “back should be taken in, and his knees let out,” within three hours from the first trial.

But with Waddy disappointment appeared to be the order of the day. His “toilet tools,” as he had termed them, were missing. His razors, which, for the occasion, had been

expressly sent to be re-set, had not been returned. At this discovery the porter was dispatched to “bring them, done or undone;” but the porter returned as he went. The “setter” had set-off in search of the grinder; and the grinder was a “roving *blade*,” who loved his beer better than his business.

It has been said by a departed dramatist, that “some men’s antipathies are cats, rats, mice, old maids, double-tripe, Cheshire cheese, and cork-cutters.” But Waddy’s greatest aversion—an aversion amounting almost to horror, was that of placing his chin in the hands of a closer shaver than himself; but necessity has no law—not even for lawyers. The porter, at the risk of losing the barrister’s business, was directed to bring by the *pell* the nearest barber.

An hour had nearly elapsed, ere the summoned Strop entered Waddy’s chamber.

“ You *barbers*,” said he, laying on the operator’s calling a sneering stress, “ require a cursed deal of seeking.”

“ Had you sent for a hair-dresser, sir, should 'ave returned in a tythe of the time.”

“ Why ! where's the difference ? You seem to be very nice in your terms of distinction,” a favourite phrase with the lawyer.

“ Terms ! terms, sir !” rejoined Strop, “ makes all the difference. A *cut*, and a shave, are two very different things.”

“ By the lord chief justice, if you *cut* me shaving,” menaced the irritable lawyer, “ I'll level you as flat as a flounder.”

Waddy's fears and threats produced a smile worthy of a barber's most dignified moments.

The lawyer had hardly bared his neck,—seated himself in his chair, and received the first lather of the loquacious Strop, ere the latter opened on his patient a voluble battery.

“ Powerful speech, sir, that o' yours t'other day in the *Pleas*—created a great sensation,” suiting the action to the word, as he soaped down the lawyer with a double allowance of froth. “ Make a great noise on the turf!—terrible tug on the brain!—not sur-

prising gentlemen of the bar get so soon gray !—lungs too, must feel it much !—only wonder nature can stand it !”

The only wonder was, that Waddy’s nature could stand being taken by the nose.

“ Bless my soul !” continued the garrulous Strop, “ what a tough stubble !—turn all my tools into regular saws. Sharp words, sir, in the House last night—Speaker compelled to interfere—Mister B—— went beyond the mark —all but bound over to the custody of the serjeant at arms—very wiery indeed, sir.—Should always, always, sir, shave against the grain.”

“ I’m compelled to do many things against the grain,” said Waddy, sputtering out a portion of the lather, of which, despite of his teeth, Strop had continued to insinuate, not a little into the lawyer’s mouth.

“ Talked in the wrong time, sir. When in our hands, sir, should always time your talk. Astonishing how soon some gentlemen learn the secret.”

“ Learn the secret—would to heaven you

would learn how to hold your d——d chattering tongue."

Waddy had now been put out of pain. Strop had achieved his task; and the lawyer rose from his seat with a chin unusually clean.

"Now, sir," said the operator, rubbing his hands, with a self-satisfied air; "now, sir, since I have had the happiness of not cutting your face, I hope in return, you 'll allow me the honour of cutting your hair."

Waddy thought he had already suffered enough; and therefore declined a further infliction. Strop took a scrutinizing look at the lawyer's head; shook his own; retreated a couple of steps, and thus spoke:

"Pardon the observation, sir; mean not the slightest offence. But, really, sir,—really in its present state, yer hair resembles a running commentary on the riot act."

Strop's witticism, although a borrowed joke, had won for him many a job.

In resuming his seat, (for Waddy had

struck to Strop's simile,) an unperused brief had been taken up by the barrister, for the double purpose of checking the chatterer's tongue, and peeping at his client's case.

"In what manner, sir," asked the artist, ready to commence operations, "would you like your hair cut?"

"In silence, sir!"

Strop felt the full force of Waddy's rebuke, but reserved to himself the right of a *cutting* retort. The lawyer's "riot"-locks were clipped to the very roots. No parish-boy ever suffered a closer crop. The tail was alone spared to

"Mourn the hope that left it."

The penalty of the "*Poll-tax*," was the price of Waddy's wit.

Strop had to make a hasty retreat, under a voluble fire of heavy imprecations.

Having seen sufficient of his client's case, Waddy thought, whilst awaiting the tailor's

return, he might now look a little into his own. With this view, the brief was set aside for an old book he had recently purchased at a stall. It was a treatise written by *Feltham*,* entitled, "*Marriage and Single Life*."

The reader seemed quite absorbed in his subject.

"‘*Poverty in Wedlocke*,’" proceeded he, reading aloud, "‘is a great decayer of loue and contentation, and riches can finde many waies to diuert an inconvenience.’"

"‘Clever fellow, this Feltham. Doubtless his reasoning is bottomed on experience.’"

"‘Self-conceited people never agree well together: they are wilful in their brawles, and reason cannot reconcile them. * * * * * But the worst is, when it lights on the vvoman; she will thinke to rule, because she hath the subtillier braine; and the man will look for’t, as the privilege of his sex. Then

* "‘*Feltham’s Resolves*.’" Published in 1631.

certainly there will be mad worke, when wit is at warre with prerogative. Yet again, where marriage prove vnfortunate, a woman with a bad husband is much worse off than a man with a bad vvife. Men have much more freedom to court their content abroad.' ”

“ Very encouraging, indeed,” observed the reader.

“ ‘ Questionless, a woman with a wise soul is the fittest companion for man : otherwise, God would have given him a friend, rather than a wife.’ ”

“ But then, Mr. Feltham, is every wife a gift from God ? ”

“ ‘ It is the crowne of blessings, when in one woman a man findeth both a wife and a friend. Single life cannot have this happiness ; though in some minds it hath many it preferres before it. This hath fewer cares, and more longings ; but marriage hath fewer longings and more cares.’ ”

“ Well,” said Waddy, “ I neither long for

the cares, nor care for the longings ; but I wish, on my soul, the business was brought to a close!"

"Yes, sir, I have brought your clothes," said the tailor, at that moment entering the room with Waddy's diminished back and enlarged knees. Snip thought, on eying his customer, that his head had also undergone something of alteration.

The altered coat, nankeen tights, and white vest, were severally tried, and were now permitted to pass muster.—No time was to be lost. The hour appointed for the tender meeting was at one, and it was already twenty minutes after twelve.

And now with his close crop, which required an additional quantity of pomatum and powder, to prevent his newly bent beaver, as sailors say, falling over his eyes ; his short nankeen "tights," and long knee-ties dangling down his spider legs, which were encased in white silken ribbed hose, and his well

polished shoes, eclipsed only by the gloss of his coat, was Waddy seen to enter a "jarvey," and to drive from the Temple-court, to the utter astonishment of many a briefless barrister and wigless wag.

CHAPTER XIV.

“ Sure such a pair was never seen,
So justly formed to meet by nature.”

DUENNA.

“ A pretty new way of gallanting,
Between soliciting and ranting.”

HUDIBRAS.

THE lady to whom Waddy was about to introduce himself, as a “ready made” lover, was, according to Le Sage’s description of the landlady in *Gil Blas*, a little lean, fierce, insolent creature, with nevertheless a vast inclination for the homage, not to say, the tenderer manifestations of man. With a happy insensibility to her own personal and moral defects, she thought that her diminutive stature was

interesting and genteel—her want of roundness was elevated into fairy proportions—her fierceness and insolence were only signs of *belle esprit*, which gave a certain *spirituelle* air to her pretensions. The opposite qualities upon which in their contended ignorance men were too apt to place great value, were by her emphatically depreciated. A graceful height of figure involved the coarseness of the Brobdignags—the soft and swelling proportions peculiar to the sex were, in her eyes, evidences of rustic coarseness—and gentleness of temper was interpreted into poverty of spirit, from which she thanked her Maker she was wholly free.—*She* should like to see the man who would dare, even in an act of omission, to slight her.

Such was the lady who sat, or rather reclined on her sofa, in the interesting expectation of an impromptu suitor; and our fair readers will easily imagine the flutter she either felt or feigned at so critical a moment.—Her trepidation, however, if indeed she underwent any,

had not precluded her from superintending the careful arrangement of the room wherein the interview was to take place, nor prevented her from pouring on the head of her servant-maid a volley of objurgation, if she committed any, even the slightest, oversight in the position of a chair, or the location of a table, of which faults the maid-of-all-work had been unusually guilty on this eventful morning; for, if the truth must be told, the girl having got some inkling of the business in hand, was even more "flustered" on the occasion than her mistress. A wedding in prospective, or a "popping of the question," causes a palpitation, not only in the hearts of the principals, but in those of every woman connected with the parties, from the highest to the lowest. Your bride-maids, ay, and chambermaids too, are as sensitive and excited in such matters as the person most interested in the event.

If Miss Tomlinson was thus precise in the array of her room, she was not less so in that of her person. She had no idea of an inte-

resting dishabille, or of languor too great to admit of the studied graces of the toilet.—Not she: her hair had been anxiously built up and pinned and folded, and pomatumed; and on the summit of the elevation was placed a diminutive laced cap. The large cylindrical curls at the side were set-off by one long snakey lock that played against her sharp visage, the natural fierceness of which was improved by a plentiful coat of rouge. In scorn of the summer heat she had* chosen a gown of blazing vermillion satin, starred over with white spots; and the long bodice, so fashionable in those days, confined her waist with a strict and stifling compression, as if to furnish a more piquant contrast to those cork aids to that part of the figure, which in the present day, is consigned to the mysterious decoration of the bussel. The train of her gown, bordered with puckered silk, flowing off behind, displayed a sky-blue satin petticoat, with a deep flounce,* and the front of her

* It may seem singular, that a nautical writer should be conversant with *millinary* tactics; but it must be

figure was ornamented with an apron of transparent lace. Her arms were carefully arrayed in tight fitting sleeves embellished just above the elbow with a yellow bow, below which appeared a deep frill of the finest Valenciennes lace. Her bracelets were of black velvet, held by a gilt tiger's head; and her shoes (so small and so painful, as to seem, had she been a Catholic, worn rather for penance than for walking,) were elevated by a high and narrow heel.

The rattling roll and sudden "pull-up" of a vehicle in front of the lady's dwelling, fol-

borne in mind, that seamen are not only indebted to the fair sex for many of their "terms of art," but also to the "*modistes*" of the land, for much of the knowledge essential in seamanship. For example, no man can pass for a thorough seaman unless he can "handle his needle," and execute with precision every possible "stitch" from the "herring-bone" to the "double seam." He must also be able to "gore,"—"cut upon the bias,"—"taughten his stays," "pass an earing," and "clap a bonnet on his jib." In the last particular, Jack, who often reverses matters, differs with the adies of the land: he "claps" his bonnet on the "foot" instead of on the head of his jib.

lowed by a startling knock at the street door, had already produced a “a move,” which went to illustrate the truth of the old proverb—

“The more haste the less speed.”

In her anxiety to answer the summons promptly, the servant “tumbling-up stairs,” started the “tendon Achillis.” The severity of the pain arrested the girl’s progress, who after several fruitless efforts to raise herself, and procure a firm footing on the floor, eventually fell into a swoon, and lay prostrate at the top of the kitchen stairs.

For reasons best known to her mistress, the cook had received permission to go out for the day—“Sufficient for the day was the evil thereof”—

Again had the heavy hand of “coachee” thundered forth his clamorous demand for admission; and again a corresponding peal from the drawing-room bell reverberated below. At length, exasperated at the three unanswered, and apparently unheeded, knocks, the mistress

descended, and condescended to proceed to the passage which led to the kitchen stairs. The senseless state of the maid was soon revealed.

“Good heavens! what’s this? what’s the matter?” exclaimed the lady of the house, discovering the prostrate position of the servant—“and at *such* a time, in *such* a state!—I never saw her so before, what *will* he think?—Fanny, Fanny,—why don’t you answer?—Oh, you wretch! do you hear, you vile cretur,” continued the perplexed mistress, accompanying the question by a searching pinch in the fleshy part of poor Fanny’s arm.

“My foot—foot,” responded the sufferer in feeble accents—“Oh, ma’am, oh!—no gen-tleman cou’d—cou’d—”

The maid’s meaning was lost to the mistress—the “*no* gentleman,” syllabically uttered, only involved the lady in deeper distress—for ere Fanny had completed her sentence, the girl again relapsed into her former swoon.

Meanwhile the oscillating motion of the body of the carriage upon its springs, gave evidence

without, that the living load within was ill at ease. In the lapse of a little minute, Waddy's seat had been changed some twenty times—one moment was he seen with his back to the horses—the next facing their tails—now “changing his front,” now “falling on his rear,” now pulling up the sash of the window—now letting it down—now peeping over the pannel, and throwing an eager eye at “my lady's chamber”—now, in a subdued tone, desiring coachee to “ring long”—and now vociferating to “knock loud and batter down the door.”

At length finding the fourth “*Stir-em-upper*,” as jarvey had phrased it, seemed by outward and visible signs to arouse, not indeed the inhabitants of the dwelling he sought, but only the inmates of the adjoining houses, Waddy let loose his wrath exclaiming aloud—

“ Infernal Irish ruffian ! a palpable *hoax* after all ! Coachman,” added he, pulling out his watch, “ w 'ell give 'em a minute more, and then, if the door be not immediately opened, mount your box, and drive back to the Temple.”

“ Looks queerish, must say, sir,” observed the driver, scratching his head, “ yet the ’ouse seems nicely furnished too; moreover, I just now seed a well-wittled cat crass the hairy.”

“ Come, try once more,” said Waddy.

After a heavy hammering, the lady’s street door at length relaxed its inhospitable hold—It was *half* opened by the lady herself.

“ Does Mrs. Tomlinson live here?” inquired the driver, gruffly.

“ *Miss* Tomlinson does,” replied the lady, endeavouring by the intervention of the half closed door to conceal her person and gay attire from the interrogator’s rude and somewhat suspicious scrutiny. Turning his back to the *Belle*, and touching his hat to his “*fare*,” jarvey reported that—

“ *Miss* lived here—but that the *Missus* was missing”—muttering to himself, as he turned from Waddy to adjust the trace and harness of the near horse—“ thought all along—’twant altogether right.”

“ Come, sir, quick—quick—open the door—

let me out," cried Waddy, motioning jarvey to hurry his movements. But the driver was not to be driven out of his usual pace. He was at all times a "slow coach," and therefore took his time to deliver his load. The coach door was at length opened, down went the steps—clack, clack, clack, and out jumped the impatient suitor. Entering the hall with hurried step, his first glance at the bedizened damsel, who performed the part of portress, and who had already made a slight retrograde movement, produced a sudden halt. Waddy stood mute—the lady motionless—a reciprocal stare of surprise ensued. At length the gentleman broke silence.

"Pray, madam," said he, advancing towards the lady with his hat barely raised from his shorn head—"may I be permitted to ask, am I addressing myself to *Miss Tomlinson*?"

"You *har*, sir," replied the lady, laying an *exasperating* stress on the verb; "and, in return, sir, may I ask *har you* Mister Waddy of the *Hinner Temple*?"

“ The same, madam, and at your service ;” replied Waddy, with a bow.

“ Then, pray, sir, walk this way. I *hove* it to myself to explain what may seem strange,” said the ruffled spinster, advancing with a quick step, and running accompaniment of rustling satin, towards the head of the kitchen stairs.

Waddy thought, as he followed the charmer in the passage leading to the lower regions, that the kitchen was not the locality exactly suited for the reception of a suitor ; nor did he think that a lady, who, according to her agent’s account, “ looked so high,” “ owed much to herself” in selecting so low a *sanctum* ; but he recollects, that “ formalities were to be dispensed with.”

“ There, sir,” exclaimed the mortified fair, assuming a tragic tone, as she pointed to the position of her servant—“ there, sir, my maid’s situation is the *honly* apology I can *hoffer* for detaining you so long at the door.”

“ Bless my soul !” ejaculated the lawyer, eyeing the motionless maid, “ this looks like

something serious. Any reason, madam, to apprehend apoplexy?—Subject to determination of blood to the head?"

"Indeed, sir, I can't say what she is subject to, or what has gotten into her ead,—but I know, I never before saw her in a similar state—nor had I the least *h*idear she *so* indulged."

"It is not *that*, ma'am!" said Waddy; "I fear it's something worse—should lose no time in sending for a surgeon. Nothing, do you know, madam," added the hypocritical suitor, shamming humanity, and playing-off a little of tender-hearted feeling,—"nothing, positively, so much unmans me as the sight of a suffering female. Do, my dear madam, do dispatch some swift-footed fellow for a medical man."

"I have no one to send. For certain reasons, I gave permission to *hall* my other servants to go out for the day."

"Oh! my foot!—oh dear! dear!" moaned the maid, shifting the position of the unhurt limb.

Waddy's hand had already encircled Fanny's

foot, which, though it appertained to a menial, might, from its diminutive form, have passed for an aristocratic limb :—“ Suffer much, my dear ?—Great thing, could we get her to ‘ suffer a *recovery*,’ as we say in the law.”

At length, at the suggestion of the suitor, the cripple was placed in the coach at the door, Waddy having found and feed a volunteer to accompany the patient to the nearest hospital.

The contracting parties now repaired to the drawing-room. The lady betook herself to her sofa, and the gentleman to a chair, assuming in his seat a composed posture, his left hand lying carelessly on the lady’s off-side of the table, which to the *vis-à-vis* seated couple, seemed to be the voluntary line of demarcation until matters drew nearer to a close.

The suitor now saw his “intended” in a truer light. The mental and bodily commotion into which the maid’s accident had thrown the mistress, added to the melting moisture produced on the surface, had not permitted the

borrowed bloom, which had “mantled her cheeks,” to remain in quiet relief. The lady had also seen the lover in a very different view from that of her “man of business.” In her estimation, the gentleman’s eyes were *not* those “which ladies so much admire.” It was manifest that the personal appearance of each party had produced mutual disappointment. At length, after a short pause, Waddy opened his case:—

“ My Lud, — I really,” said he, catching himself in his ludicrous mistake, “ really have to beg your pardon. Such, you see, madam, is the force of habit, the custom of the tongue. But to business—the case,” proceeded Waddy, “ appears to me to be one of those which a discreet agent never would have suffered to come to trial.”

Belinda stared.

“ The matter,” continued the lawyer, “ has been submitted to arbitration; and by that decision the appealing parties are both bound to abide.”

“ What *harbitration*, sir ? ” asked the lady.

“ Your agent’s, madam.”

“ Oh, true ! ”

“ Now, madam, the case resolves itself into a mere nutshell. By a singular unity of sentiment, you advertise my views — ”

“ *Your views*, sir ! ” interrupted Belinda.

“ Yes, madam, my very views touching the annoyances consequent upon protracted courtship. I answer—see—and satisfy your confidential friend ; and by him am received as an accepted suitor.”

“ Mr. O’Finn,” returned the lady, “ was instructed to accept you conditionally.”

“ O’Finn, did you say ? ” asked Waddy, in a tone of anxious solicitude.

“ Yes ; my managing and confidential friend.”

“ Pray, is his name Phelan Fitzgerald O’Finn ? ”

“ The same.”

“ Why, bless my soul ! madam, that must be the same man that sent me the message.”

“ Not on my account.”

“ On a lady’s, certainly,” said Waddy.

“ Impossible!” returned Miss Tomlinson; “ because he was strictly enjoined neither to receive nor send *messages*, and particularly to reject every thing like a written overture.”

“ But, my dear madam, we were to have met in the field!”

“ But, if I mistake not, you met in Surrey street—did you not?”

“ Most certainly—but not on *that* score.”

“ It’s very hodd,” said the lady.

“ Very odd, indeed!” echoed Waddy. “ Something singular, that the first man whom I had all but fought—should now be the first to find me a wife. But it is truly Irish.”

“ I know the Hyrish are sometimes very hodd; but, I’m sure, Mr. Waddy, there could have been no necessity on my account to come to words.”

“ Words, madam! why, at this very moment, we are both bound over to keep the peace.”

“ Well, *I* declare!—what devotion!—and

what *delicacy*, in concealing the matter from *me!*"

"Why, as to delicacy," said Waddy, "in concealing the matter, I rather think it must have been extended even to more, madam, than to you; for, if your managing and confidential friend be the same person who on a certain occasion sent to me a *fighting* friend, I can only say, that my former unknown antagonist, and present amicable ally, has very cautiously confined the secret to himself. But 't were a waste of thought to indulge the supposition. Effrontery and philosophy seldom go hand in hand. But to turn to a more pleasing topic. Now, madam, though, as Shakspeare says—

"Oft expectation fails, and most oft there
Where most it promises;"

still, I take it, that morally and *legally*, we are both bound to take things as we find them."

"Do you mean with respect to the settlements, sir?"

“ Why, if I understand your agent rightly, we are not at issue upon that score—though, indeed, upon the issue of marriage a settlement should mainly depend. Not that the enlarged mind looks to the minor matter of a marriage-settlement, to settle a marriage. The common course may suit the common mind; but you, madam, have already shewn that you soar above it.”

A slight inclination of the head testified that the compliment was not altogether lost on the lady.

The suitor proceeded.

“ Now, my dear madam, what is matrimony?—a mere lottery. And the process of courtship?—two people trying to pull for a prize. And, after all, what matters it in the end, in what way the ‘ blind ’ or the ‘ blind-folded boy ’ performs his work—whether he pulls from the bow, or pulls from the wheel?”

Notwithstanding that the lady’s manner manifested little of *penchant* for the pleader’s person, still, his new reading of the “ Marriage

Act," decked with allegorical allusions, and delivered with that warmth of enthusiasm which the little lawyer could at all times so easily assume, had won for him a favourable verdict. In point of fact, Belinda had already nodded a sort of negative assent.

It has been said, that "all attraction is increased by the approach of the attracting body"—that, "we never find ourselves so desirous to finish as in the latter part of our work, or so impatient of delay as when we know that delay cannot be long." This was the case with the impatient Waddy: his hopes flattered—he could not suffer them to be longer withheld.

"Now, my dear Miss T." said he, rising suddenly from his seat—"now I consider the 'deed' the same as 'executed;' and, with your permission, we shall proceed forthwith to publish the banns."

"Well, *I* declare!—Oh! dear, sir, you really *har* ——"

"What, madam?"

“ Too pressing !”

Conceiving that in his Dulcinea’s reply there was something of dissimulation, or, in other words, that the lady’s “ too pressing ” was merely a hint for the gentleman to be *more* so, the leering lawyer, at once assuming the ardent lover, sought to seal the “ contracting tie ” with a chaste salute :—but having previously intimated his intention to inquire, on his way home, after “ Fanny’s foot,” the civil action was treated as a “ trespass,” and repelled by force of arms.

A *scene* ensued : the lady sought her salts— they were not at hand ; Waddy, in substitution, presented his snuff-box—an offer which was repaid by the whole contents being thrown back in his eyes.

“ Who’s the *blind*-boy now ?” cried the mischievous spinster, affecting the air of a giddy hoyden, as she departed the drawing-room to re-rouge and otherwise “ repair damages aloft.”

Waddy, for some minutes, was left solus, stamping about the room in excruciating pain.

“It seems,” said he, “I’m eternally doomed to be tortured by the softer sex.—This is throwing dust in one’s eyes with a vengeance.—Feeling!—there’s not a particle in her composition—might blind a man for life.”

At this moment the lady re-entered the drawing-room.

Contrariety, assuredly, is a striking characteristic in the female mind. Here was a woman, who but a few minutes since had manifested so much of offended feeling at the forward familiarity and coarse advances of her suitor, had now returned to his presence for the express purpose of conciliating his temper.

“Well *I* declare—really,” said she, in a soothing tone, approaching her sullen and disconcerted suitor, whose handkerchief was still upheld to his suffering optic, “really, Mister Waddy, I’m sorry to see you still in pain;

but upon my honnor you brought it *hall* upon yourself—come, suppose, we shake 'ands."

The handkerchief fell from the sufferer's eye. The proffered hand was seized with a convulsive grasp.

"Now by this hand I swear——"

"Swear!" interrupted Belinda. "What would you swear, Mister Waddy?"

"I swear by this hand to hold you to your bond."

"Then pray hold not so hard," returned the bondsmaid, endeavouring to extricate her delicate limb from the barrister's vice.

"'Tis, then, a bargain?"

"Yes, and a hard bargain too," retorted the struggling shrew.

"Come, that's not so bad," said Waddy, grinning and displaying his white teeth: "I can tolerate any wit but manual wit. Well," added he, dropping his Dulcinea's attenuated hand, and assuming a more tender and endearing attitude—for his right arm had imperceptibly encircled her slender waist—"well,

perhaps, it's all for the best—perhaps we shall all the sooner understand one another: people, you know, get sooner acquainted in rugged roads than in pleasant paths; for, as the poet says,

“ ‘ In all amours, a lover burns
With frowns as well as smiles by turns;
And hearts have been as oft with sullen
As charming looks surprised and stolen.’ ”*

“ How very *hapt*! Why, I declare, Mr. Waddy, you seem to have Shakspeare at your very fingers' ends. But the gentlemen of the law *har* so clever—so well read!”

“ Why, yes: unless a lawyer—I mean a barrister, for we of the long robe seldom usurp the shorter title—but unless a barrister be a living library of learning, his vocation becomes little better than a *dead letter*.”

And after playing off a little of the facetious, and ultimately affecting a “ fond farewell,” the lover took his departure, leaving his betrothed to brood over her “ maiden meditations, fancy free.”

* Hudibras.

CHAPTER XV.

“A loving letter with a mystic seal.”

BYRON.

SATISFIED in his own mind that marital matters were now in a regular train, and that by prompt measures, all doubts, delicacies, and difficulties had been already overcome, Waddy, who at all times advocated “the course of Nature,”—convinced, as he was wont to assert, that that antiquated dame was of all females the most obstinate and tenacious of purpose—determined, as far as related to his own *artificial*

flame, to “let things take their natural course.” Besides, though in town “Belinda’s business” had been brought to a close, in the country the barrister’s had yet to begin. In other words, Waddy had to “go circuit;” and therefore, having always an “eye to the main chance,” he came to the philosophic conclusion, that during the time intervening between the “first and third calling in church,” he might be profitably employed in practising his calling in court.

Some fourteen days had elapsed since Waddy departed the metropolis, when the bride elect received per post the subjoined epistle.

“ Newcastle-upon-Tyne,
“ July 25th, 1794.

“ MY DEAR MISS T.—*Belinda*, I should have penned—for formal appellatives, and formalities of every description, are my utter aversion :

“ My first letter, announcing my arrival in the North, I presume has already reached you. A draft of the ‘settlements’ you will receive by

to-morrow's coach—so that when I return to town, they will only require to be engrossed and executed in the regular way.

“ My success this circuit has been unprecedented. I have carried all before me; and am yet so beset with briefs and professional business, that little or no time has been allowed me to think of domestic matters. The defence I made in the case of ‘*Syms versus Searl*’ has produced a sensation of no ordinary nature: the trial, as reported in the *Newcastle Chronicle*, will accompany the settlements. A friend has undertaken the charge of my packet—probably he will deliver it in person.

“ The plaintiff failed, and fatally too, in proving her case. She sought, upon learning that a large funded property had been recently left to my client, to entrap him into a matrimonial *engagement* :—but failing in every particular to prove even the shadow of the tender intention, much less an unconditional *promise* of marriage, the defendant—a very fine young man, by the by—came off with flying colours.

The fact is, nothing like a treaty, covenant, or semblance of a *contracting* tie, could be at all established, or made manifest to the minds of the jury. The trial, I think, will amuse you much. Nor is it altogether without its moral. It clearly shows, that in receiving the addresses of a suitor, the absence of candour will always recoil on the fair, or rather *un-fair* defaulter. In short, it shews that *she* who trifles with the feelings and affections,—indulges in that vain and reprehensible practice, that vexatious vice of *flirting*,—mars only her own designs, and ministers to her own defeat.

“ July 26th, midnight.

“ Yesterday being Sunday, I indulged in a little rural recreation. I explored, in company with a professional friend, the right bank of the river Tyne. From Newcastle to North Shields, some eight or nine miles in extent, the entire line of undulating land is undermined, and hollowed-out into huge coal-holes, which are intersected by dark subterraneous

passages of appalling depth. And, instead of the blue vault of heaven canopying the sable-sanded surface of the ground, nought is seen to overhang the glittering earth, or to float in the heated atmosphere, but dense accumulating clouds of black suffocating smoke.

“ Heavy suit to-day—much fatigued—gained my client’s cause. I purpose taking my departure on the 29th or 30th at furthest. I hope in heaven I may not be accompanied by the same description of travellers as those with whom I was so unfortunate to journey downwards—for, contrary to my usual custom, I travelled in a public carriage.

“ Fancy being for upwards of thirty hours cooped-up and stewed in a stage-coach, with five fellow-travellers opposing each other, not only in every turn of limb, but in every turn of thought. First on the list was an old wheezing, asthmatic, broken-winded glass-blower, booked for the other world, who was in constant altercation with a tall, thin, testy, ill-conditioned, crooked-minded old maid, who

insisted upon keeping out the night air, by keeping up the coach windows long after the day had dawned. Then we had an Irish recruiting captain of a marching regiment, with shoulders as broad as his brogue,—and like his ‘travelling pistols,’—which, as he had early intimated, were always primed and loaded in his portmanteau—ready to go off at every disputed point. Then we had a rough, snoring sailor—a captain of a collier, who never woke but to ‘wet his whistle,’ or to swear strange oaths, that ‘land travelling always turned him sea-sick, particularly when the wind was foul,’ or, as he termed it, ‘right in his teeth.’ This sea-savage was not unknown to me: I once saw him ejected the Common Pleas for boisterous and unbecoming conduct. The fifth of our ‘*heavy inside*’ was a woman of enormous corporeal capacity. She entirely trusted to her own *weight* to make her way. She said little: her forte was more in the liquor-line. She would have made an excellent mate for the tippling tar. By the by, the tall testy old

maid, save that she was more advanced in years, reminded me much of a spare irritable tabby I once met at a certain establishment in the vicinity of Bloomsbury.

“Compliments to Mr. O’F. Tell him the ‘*decided step*’ may be taken immediately on my return to town, and that nothing need now retard the consummation of all our wishes.—The wedding doings, of course, I leave entirely to you. The sex manage these matters best, though at the same time I think, as it only happens *once* in a way, we may as well, when about it, do the thing handsomely. I assure you, it is my ardent desire, my dearest Belinda, to make our wedding day a day of joy and jollity.

“My paper is full. I am a poor correspondent. Good night—God bless you !

“Ever *yours*,

“my dear Belinda,

“W. W.

“P. S. I am glad to hear such good tidings from my housekeeper; she informs me that I

shall be delighted with the house now the carpets are down."

This delectable production preceded the writer's return to the metropolis by five days.

Early on the evening of the day of the barrister's arrival in town, he proceeded to the dwelling of his mistress. The announcement of "Mr. Waddy," by a strange servant (for Fanny's place had been supplied by a domestic of a "coarser mould,") had already stifled a warm altercation between Miss Moore and the bride elect, touching the propriety of hastening the nuptial knot. The former contended, that delays were always dangerous, and saw not the least necessity to protract the wedding a single day after the settlements were signed, and "lagally executed." The sensitive Belinda talked of "*delicacy*," and urged the necessity of gaining time, if only to know more of the gentleman's mind. But, unlike Belinda's toilet (for the impatient suitor had taken his intended rather by surprise), the gentleman's mind had been already "made up," and

neither the order of the Court, nor courtship, could be now rescinded.

On entering the room, the barrister was not a little “taken aback,” at finding Belinda closeted with the same “irritable tabby” to whom in his late letter he had made an uncourteous allusion. For Waddy, up to this hour, had been ignorant that Miss Moore had been ever acquainted with Miss Tomlinson, much more that she was the plotter of the present match. The lover, too, thought his intended had received him coolly, and, of course, concluded that the “Tabby” had been making mischief.

“I beg your pardon,” said he, addressing the “unadorned” damsel, “I beg your pardon—a word with you aside.”

Belinda arose and accompanied her admirer to another end of the room.

“Is that lady a friend of yours?”

“Yes; and of yours too, Mr. Waddy.”

“We have met before, I know; but I hope she has not been speaking disparagingly of me?”

“Of *you*, mister Waddy?—why, she’s your warmest friend.”

“Perhaps that accounts for your receiving me so *coolly*; but, upon my life,” said the lawyer, subduing his voice, “I never gave her the least encouragement—never bestowed on her a tender thought.”

“Nonsense, Mr. Waddy; you *do* talk so!”

“Always, madam, to the purpose; and therefore, as the purport of my present visit is to arrange matters as speedily as possible for the celebration of our nuptials, it strikes me it would be desirable to dispense with the presence of your female friend.”

“Well, *I* declare!—what next? Why, Mr. Waddy,” returned Miss Tomlinson, “as Mrs. Moore has been my confidante from the first, it might seem extremely inconsistent in me now ——”

“Oh!” interrupted the Irish lady, “do not let me be at all in the way. I hate to be what the French call ‘*un de trop*? If you and Mr. Waddy ——”

But at this point, the voice of Miss Tomlinson became peremptory. "I understand you not, Mrs. Moore; nor do I clearly comprehend you, Mr. Waddy. Surely, sir, you would not now deprive me of my friend's advice! Suffer me, therefore, so long as I can call my liberty my own, to be somewhat positive, and to insist that my friend shall be present at our little consultation. Sit down, Mrs. Moore; you shall *not* leave the room!"

Mrs. Moore, who had risen from her chair in a huff (as the phrase is), when Waddy had the assurance and the want of gallantry to propose that she should retire from the room, now sulkily resumed her seat, and the barrister indeed looked very much like a fool.

"Well," resumed the bride elect, "I believe our present business, since Mr. Waddy is *so* pressing," (and here the speaker smiled graciously,) "concerns the selection of the party who are to be present at the bridal breakfast. On my part, I leave the matter entirely in the 'ands of Mrs. Moore, trusting, and indeed

being confident, that you, Mr. Waddy, will
hask none but discreet persons."

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Waddy, "what's this? Why entertain such a doubt? Don't I look as if I had arrived at years of discretion?"

"Indeed you *do*, Mr. Waddy."

Mrs. Moore saw, even in this slight bickering, the first symptoms of a coming storm; and as this was by no means what she wished, she stifled her rising pique against Waddy, and with a desperate attempt at a fascinating look and tone of voice, said—

"Sure you are both of a mind; and I am the more certain of that same, because you're *ach* so impatient when *ather* of you seems to doubt it; but lovers will have their little ways. Now as I am to arrange matters relative to the feet" (meaning *fête*), "and to see to the distribution of the *fevers* —"

"Pray, madam," interrupted Waddy, whose unlucky star still hung over him, "may I be allowed to ask, with all due humility and de-

ference, whether it is quite according to rule—— I mean no offence—— quite the contrary—— my only aim is to be correct and punctilious in every particular—— the fact is, in these matters I am as ignorant as the babe unborn—— but I wish to ascertain whether it is quite according to hymeneal etiquette, that a brides-maid should use the prefix of *Mrs.*? ”

At the conclusion of this circumlocutory question, both ladies drew back their chairs, and looked with indignant wonder full in the face of the barrister: the odds were fearful — two women, and two *such* women, to one man. The barrister was moreover at another disadvantage — he was not in court, but courting; and, as the truth must be spoken, even *he* looked dismayed. The whole group formed what on the stage is called “ a situation,” inasmuch as the two ladies assumed the attitude of surprise and indignation, and Waddy that of momentary embarrassment.

But for reasons best known to herself, the feeling was transitory in Mrs. Moore. It would

not have done “to quarrel,” as the saying is, “with her bread and butter ;” so she pocketed the insult, and with feminine condescension began to enlighten the innocent gentleman.

“Why, you see, Mr. Waddy—though in my country, we should call you Counsellor—but you see, though I am not exactly an old woman *yet*, I feel I have been too long out of my ‘teens’ to continue what you are plased to term the prafix of *Miss*: so in common with other spinsters of a certain age, I have assumed the more felicitous title of *Mistress*—but mind ye, counsellor, with a certain qualification. Miss Tomlinson is plased to call me Mrs. Moore—and its my kind and dearest of friends, that well knows she may call me what she plases—but my rael style, as the heralds say, is *Mistress Elizabeth Moore*. Now, do you understand me, Mr. Waddy—I mane, Counsellor?”

“Perfectly, madam. Pray accept my apology, and permit me to state to you, as the undoubted mistress of the ceremonies, that although the list of friends whom I desire should

witness the happy event is but small, it nevertheless contains several names eminent in the law."

These names were duly handed to the officiating spinster, and the council broke up, after settling the day for the wedding. A sumptuous breakfast was to be given at the dwelling of the bride, the superintendence of which was to devolve upon the Milesian lady.—We say sumptuous, because the phrase "*splendid*" was not then in vogue. Nothing, in fact, was then splendid but the King's Court and the *tails* of his royal tars.

CHAPTER XVI.

— “Preposterous event.”

LOVE’S LABOUR LOST.

“A deep divorcing vow.”

COMEDY OF ERRORS.

THE nuptial day arrived. Miss Tomlinson and Mrs. Elizabeth, accompanied by a third lady, started for the church in one carriage, and Waddy and O’Finn, who was to officiate as father and give the bride away, proceeded in another. As the latter detachment was progressing to the scene of action, the vicarious father, who was in great glee, having on the previous evening received his fees of office, thus

addressed his companion : “ Come, Counsellor, this is what I call doing the thing in earnest ; 'tis you that are the lucky man. But didn't I always put a spoke in your wheel.”

“ You'll not be the loser for that.”

“ Oh ! don't mention that, Counsellor ; sure I didn't mane that, at-all at-all.”

And then turning the subject, he said, “ I hope, Counsellor, you are after bringing with you every thing you're likely to want.”

“ What do you mean ? I am completely unused to these things.”

“ Of coarse you are, and that's the rason I take care to remind you. Have you got your purse with you ? ”

“ I've a pocket full of gold.”

“ That's all right. Where have you got the ring ? ”

“ The *ring* ! ” echoed the Barrister. “ What ! is that my affair ? ”

“ Of coarse. What ! hav'n't you *got* it ? ”

“ Not I.”

“ Oh ! murder—murder ! stop the coach,”

exclaimed the Munster man, in hurried accents. “ I must fly to the nearest jeweller’s, or your character, Counsellor, is for ever, ever lost with the sex.”

“ Thank you, my good friend, for your kind consideration,” said Waddy, pulling the ‘check string.’ “ The coachman shall draw up here, and wait your return.”

O’Finn soon disappeared on his errand.

“ This it is,” soliloquised Waddy, during his absence, “ to meddle in affairs for which one is not calculated. True, instigated by my mother, I have become a wife-hunter ; but, after all, I am not the man for it: I don’t understand women, and still less their ways. Now, how was I to know that they provide not their own rings ? In spite of my ambition, it is clear I was never intended to be a marrying-man.”

“ Here it is,” said O’Finn, returning to the bridegroom, in breathless haste. “ Here you have it, Counsellor, clane out of the mint. Now take care of it, clap it safely in your waistcoat pocket ; and now,” added he, jumping

into the carriage, “ tell the coachman to make up for *lost* time, or the ladies will be after thinking we are behaving rather ungentalely.”

The ladies had indeed reached the church, and after remaining there several minutes began to marvel at the tardiness of the bridegroom. The ingenuity of Mrs. Moore was taxed, in vain, to account for Waddy’s absence, and, at length, the bride, despite of the delicacy of her situation, and of the sacredness of the place, broke out in the following strain—

“ Well, I declare ! it is really *too* bad. This is a pretty way, indeed, to treat a lady ! I never in *hall* my life, knew any thing so shameful. It’s shocking, shocking conduct. What will the clergyman think ? If it wasn’t for what people would say, I would instantly order the carriage,—return home, and never set eyes again on Mr. Waddy. And, even as it is,” added she, peeping through the half-closed door of the vestry room, “ I see the clerk and the beadle, and the pew-opener, *har hall* in a giggle at my expense. Flesh and blood can’t bear it ! What had I better do, Mrs. Moore ?”

“ Why, sit still,” replied the Hibernian bride’s-maid. “ My cousin will take good care that Mr. Waddy behaves like a gentleman. They have missed their way, I suppose. All will be right in a few minutes. Patience, my dear Miss T. Look at me.”

To these consolatory words, the offended spinster replied only by a pettish toss of her head, at which moment the door was thrown open, and Waddy and O’Finn entered.

“ I fear I have kept you waiting, my dear Belinda,” said the Barrister, in a suppressed tone, as he took his bride by the hand to lead her to the altar. “ I’ll tell you by and by how it happened, and make you laugh. But see the clergyman is prepared, and we must now put on grave faces, as becomes us. Nay, don’t look displeased, and at such a moment too.”

“ Yes, but I assure you I *am* displeased.”

“ Come, come,” interrupted Mrs. Moore, “ ah! now, don’t be cantankerous this blessed morn ; sure Mr. Waddy will explain all to your satisfaction when the service is over.”

“ Perhaps, Counsellor,” observed O’Finn,

“ just before we go to the altar, it wou’dn’t be amiss to thry whether the ring will fit the delicate finger of Miss Tomlinson. I love,” continued he, making his best bow to the bride, “ to replate your virgin name, now that it is so soon to be lost to us all for ever.”

But Miss Tomlinson was in no humour to relish even a compliment.

“ Confound her!” muttered O’Finn to himself, “ she looks as sour as a crock of bad butter-milk. Come,” continued he, addressing the bridegroom aloud, “ come, the ring, the ring.”

Waddy now fumbled in his waistcoat pocket and from amidst a crowd of guineas and half-guineas, extricated the ring. “ Here it is,” he said, “ allow me, my dear, just to try if it is worthy of encircling your fair finger.”

Thus solicited, Miss Tomlinson, though with no very good grace, held out her hand to her husband elect. But the reluctance (for we suppose it would be ungallant to call it sulkiness) with which she did it, embarrassed the lawyer’s experiment. He was conscious that

he cut but a foolish figure. The ring was not easily adjusted. Waddy attributed the awkwardness to the evident ill humour of the lady. Be this as it may, the “unfitness of things” was apparent; and Waddy, irritated at losing his command over the artificial character he had been compelled all the morning to assume, broke out at once into his natural vein, with—“D—n me, madam, how very stupid you are !”

“ Not so stupid, sir, as you may imagine,” tartly retorted Miss Tomlinson; “ you shall see that at any rate I have wit enough to free myself from the trammels of a vulgar fellow !”

So saying, and calling on Mrs. Moore to follow her, she flounced out of the church in a towering passion, leaving the bridegroom and his *ring-leader* aghast with astonishment.

“ Oh, murder ! Counsellor,—here’s a purty kettle of fish !—whoever thought things would come to this ? And the buteeful breakfast too !”

“ Vulgar !—D—n her impudence !—What a vixen !” exclaimed Waddy.



Up the house walking off

L A N D S H A R K S

AND

SEA GULLS.

BOOK II.

THE WIDOW.

“ Nature, that loves not to be question’d
Why she did this, or that, but has her ends,
And knows she does well, never gave the world
Two things so opposite, so contrary,
As he and I.”

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

BOOK II.

THE WIDOW.

CHAPTER I.

“ Poverty requireth but one virtue,—
Patience to support it.”

GILPIN.

LET moralists and other philosophers talk as they will, the greatest evil under the sun is poverty. Disease and sorrow may obtain temporary alleviation, but poverty cannot be palliated ; nay, so wretched are its attributes, that they are not unfrequently associated with guilt, and accordingly in “ Moral England,” poverty is classed as crime.

Gray, the Poet, though he never himself was afflicted with penury, was aware of its horrors, having twice made it the dismal climax of a “grisly troop” of passions!—One of the stanzas in his Hymn to Adversity concludes with this awful line—

“Despair, and fell Disease, and *ghastly* Poverty!”

What a grand epithet!—And in his noble Ode on Eton College, after enumerating all the evils which flesh is heir to, he exclaims with a kind of sacerdotal solemnity—

“Lo! Poverty to fill the band,
That numbs the soul with icy hand!”

The present victims of this dread influence (a bereaved wife and an infant in arms) were, alas! too gentle and feeble to endure, without sinking, the “iron scourge and torturing hour” of adversity; but they were nevertheless destined to suffer them to the fullest extent.

After Mrs. Darcy had so far recovered her

health and reason as to be enabled to debate with herself how best she might act in her extremity, she removed to London, where she took a humble lodging; and having sold what little plate she possessed, together with a few of her personal ornaments, a small fund was raised, on which she thought she could exist while she acquainted her relations in the country with the misfortune she had sustained and with her present destitution. In the death of her husband, she imagined that all cause for persecuting her would cease; that if the cruel provision in her father's will could not be nullified, the other legatees who were enriched by that provision, would at least offer to her and her boy an asylum among them. And so disconsolate was she, and so scared with apprehensions on her child's account, that any offer to the above effect would have been hailed by her with gratitude, let the conditions have been however humiliating.

But, alas! she little knew the devilish influence of selfishness, under the spell of

which actions of cold-blooded enormity are daily perpetrated; still less was she aware that in the breast even of the most flagitious, there exists a principle of shame which renders the presence of a wronged individual hardly to be borne. Day after day did the bereaved woman wait in trembling expectation for an answer to the letter; which, as if she had done wrong rather than suffered it, she timidly ventured to write to her friends in Devonshire; but no reply was made to her.

As a drowning man will catch at a straw, so did Mrs. Darcy in her forlornness cling to the almost impossible belief that her letter had miscarried. Surely her *friends* would not refuse to deign her an answer. So she wrote again—and again waited, and again despaired.

It was now evident that she was to be left to perish without one hand being held forth to save her; and had it not been for the yearnings of her heart on behalf of her helpless child she would have looked steadily at her fate, nay,

even welcomed its approach. But, broken-hearted as she was herself, an effort must be made for her boy, who, even in this season of distress, seemed to thrive, and had all the beauty of health as it looked up with unconscious smiles in its mother's face as she drew him to her bosom.

Upon the money raised by the sale of the first portion of her valuables, she had sustained herself for several weeks, during which time the landlady of the house wherein she lodged had treated her with civility. But Mrs. Darcy had been too sternly tutored of late not to treasure up much of painful experience. She knew that on the least symptom of want of money she should be exposed to the scorn and abuse of the woman; and, therefore, to drive off for as long a time as possible this aggravation of her misery, she took the remainder of her trinkets, including a portrait of her husband, set round with brilliants, to the silversmith who had purchased the first portion, and, having now abandoned all hope of aid

from her friends, she made up her mind to employ the little capital raised by the above means in the formation of an infant school. Oh ! with what bitter agony and floods of tears did she take a farewell gaze on her husband's miniature ere she sacrificed it for ever to obtain the means of support for herself and child ! Verily the world abounds in withering trials !

Having left her lodging, she took a small house in a very humble street in Islington, and set up a school for children. Much time, however, passed unprofitably away; for, being utterly unknown in the neighbourhood, Mrs. Darcy's endeavours to obtain scholars enough to remunerate her toil were fruitless. A very few children were, indeed, confided to her care, and she laboured hard to instruct them, and to keep off the sinkings of her broken heart, which foreboded, with too fatal a certainty, the destiny hanging over her. Still she toiled on, hoping one day, despairing the next, and (must we speak the bitter truth ?) starving the third. The

world little suspects what frightful tragedies are constantly going on in the squalid rooms of mean houses — what spasms of anguish are suffered, and what calm but dreadful resolutions of despair are formed !

It is astonishing how very keen-sighted people in general are in detecting what one wishes to conceal, especially if the secret be of a mortifying character. Whatever might have been Mrs. Darcy's sufferings, she was heroical enough not to complain either by word or look ; nay more, her pale countenance was occasionally decorated with a smile, like gleams of moonlight over a wintry landscape, and her words, instead of echoing her sad thoughts, were chosen from amongst those dedicated to happiness. But all this outward show was of no avail.

It is a favourite maxim in England, that " facts are stubborn things ;" and, accordingly, when her prying neighbours ascertained that the visits of Mrs. Darcy to the butcher and the baker were " few and far be-

tween," no longer was she looked upon in the light of an angel; they soon found her guilty of being poor, and, as a fitting punishment for such an offence, the parents of the few pupils entrusted to her removed their children. It was quite proper, in a country like this, that a person who ate only one meal a day should be condemned either to have none, or to seek support from the parish funds. Such a person, it was a clear case, ought not to be entitled to strive honestly like "respectable people."

Mrs. Darcy was, therefore, soon left to take her choice between death or the clemency of overseers, and, as we have already said, she would, like the Wayfarer in Chaucer,* have welcomed the approach of the grim phantom rather than appeal to the sympathy of her fellow creatures, had not the claims of her child absorbed every other feeling. What was to be done? She had laboured for bread, and had failed to obtain it. With a claim on the justice of her relatives, she had supplicated

* Chaucer's "Death and Drunkards."

only their mercy. Her appeal was met by withering silence. What was to be done?

In this dismal perplexity she recollected that she had heard her husband speak of a certain wealthy relative of his residing in Cork. Although her wedded life had been but short, and although she had lost her husband, it occurred to her, that on making known to this gentleman in how destitute a state Darcy's wife and child were plunged, something might be devised to succour them. This, therefore, she resolved to try. In the mean time, however, the demands of hunger could not be put off. Without immediate relief, the mother and her boy would both perish. But how could this be procured? Every disposable article of furniture and dress had already been converted into money. What plan could be devised to aid her in this grievous extremity?

As she meditated over her misery, her eye accidentally glanced upon her wedding-ring, which had never yet been removed from her

finger. She gazed, with tearful eyes, first at it, and then at her child, and resolved to sell it, and live (live at least until she could hear from Ireland). But, though Mrs. Darcy thus resolved to part with a token which women above all other things hold dear, her determination was not formed without harrowing throes of anguish; she kissed the ring again and again, and pressed it convulsively to her heart.

“ My ring ! ” exclaimed the wretched woman, “ must that, too, go ? symbol of our wedded love, with which my husband encircled my finger at the happy altar ! Alas, alas ! the pride of the wife, strong as that is, must bow before the misery of the mother ; and, to buy food for my boy, I must lose the most sacred of gifts, and risk detraction on myself and suspicion of legitimacy on mine and dear Darcy’s child ! — World, world ! how terrible are thy trials ! But hesitation only renders my anguish more and more intolerable.”

And she seized the ring with the intention of drawing it from her finger, when, on a sudden, it came into her mind that Mrs. Hunter had given her a letter to a barrister well skilled in the intricacies of the law, and had recommended her to consult him on her case with respect to her late uncle's will. After a slight search, the letter addressed to Waddy was found.

“I will take it immediately to Mr. Waddy,” said Mrs. Darcy to herself.

The hallowed ring was saved from desecration.

CHAPTER II.

“The usual fortune of complaint, is to excite contempt more than pity.”—DR. JOHNSON.

“Most men are animated with greater ardour by interest, than by fidelity.”—IBID.

“A LADY wishes to see you, sir, if you please,” said a clerk, entering the inner sanctum of Waddy in the Temple.

“A lady!” echoed the barrister; “what’s her name?”

“I asked her that at first, sir,” replied the clerk; “but she said, that as you didn’t know her, there could be no use in giving her name.”

“ Um ! what sort of looking woman is she ? ”

“ A very uncommon looking lady, sir.”

“ Young or old ? ”

“ Young, sir ; but she appears as if she had some trouble on her mind.”

“ No doubt ; but I ’ll take care she does not trouble me. I see how it is—some confounded memorial—a suit *in forma pauperis* : tell her I ’m busy, and can’t see her. But, hark’ee, you may as well endeavour, without reference to me, you know, to find out her business ; though depend on it I ’m right—one of your genteel beggars.”

“ Very well, sir,” said the clerk, retiring.

“ I ’m doomed to be perpetually bothered with these women ! ” ejaculated Waddy, a tender reminiscence of Miss Tomlinson no doubt stealing across his mind at the moment.

The clerk now returned. “ All I can learn of the lady’s business, sir,” said he, “ is that she brings a letter to you from one of your friends, and that she is resolved either to take it back or deliver it into your own hands.”

“A *begging* letter!” exclaimed the barrister; “I told you so—impudent hussy! Tell her to take herself and her letter to —. But, stop a moment—I may as well dismiss her myself, and then she won’t bother us any more. Where is she?—on the stairs?”

“No, sir, she’s seated in the outer room.”

“Just like ‘em. But I’ll settle her once for all.”

And Waddy accordingly sallied out from his own chamber, enveloped in his dressing gown, and glowing with the brave and heroic design of defeating a defenceless woman. But when he reached the outer room, his courage was a little cooled on observing the dignified deportment of the applicant as she rose at his approach. There was something in her manner which effectually checked the harsh words already formed for utterance on Waddy’s lips. To the beauty of his visitor the lawyer was insensible, but the loftiness of her carriage, as we have said, rather confused him, and he was forced to abandon his meditated tactics.

Begging the lady to be seated, he said, "I am told, ma'am, you have a letter for me."

"Yes, sir," replied Mrs. Darcy (for doubtless the reader has already concluded it was she); "but you can hardly expect me to deliver it *here*," added the poor lady, glancing her eye at the barrister's clerk.

"Walk this way then, madam," returned Waddy, half sullenly.

Having reached the barrister's private room of audience, Mrs. Darcy produced Mrs. Hunter's letter.

"Ah! a letter from my dear departed friend," exclaimed Waddy, making a strong effort to be pathetic; but it would not do: the harsh tones of his voice were utterly at war with sentiment, and the ludicrous obliquity of his vision would have provoked laughter even at a funeral.

"This zeal on your behalf," resumed the lawyer, after he had perused the letter, "does credit to the excellent heart of Mrs. Hunter. But, poor soul! she did not understand much

of etiquette, or she would have known that gentlemen of our branch of the profession are never directly consulted by clients, who ought in the first place to employ a solicitor, and by him is drawn up a 'case,' for the consideration of counsel. Do I make myself understood, madam?"

"Perfectly, sir," returned Mrs. Darcy. "But as my friend's letter was addressed to yourself, I conceived I was bound to see that it reached your hands."

"You have had it some time in your possession, I perceive," observed Waddy.

"Alas! yes," answered Mrs. Darcy; "and, to speak truly, I had totally forgotten its existence till the stern pressure this morning of ———"

Here the speaker became too much agitated to proceed, and burst into a flood of tears.

Waddy hated "scenes," and wished heartily that this was over. He made no attempt to condole with the sufferer, for condolence was not his forte, but remained silent, and allowed the emotion he witnessed to work its own way.

In a short time, Mrs. Darcy became more composed, and her voice, though it still sounded mournfully, regained some of its firmness as she said,

“ Oh ! Mr. Waddy, pardon the weakness of which I have just been guilty ; but indeed, sir, I have suffered more, I believe, than ever was suffered by woman. My husband was murdered almost before my eyes. I am disinherited, as Mrs. Hunter tells you in her letter, by a cruel, not to say wicked, provision in my father’s will ; and, at this moment, my child and I are—starving !”

“ Bless my soul, madam ! ” exclaimed Waddy, placing his hand on the bell, “ allow me to ring, and order —”

“ No, no,” replied Mrs. Darcy ; “ the purpose of my visit is to seek your *advice*” (laying a strong emphasis on the word). “ Should it be propitious, I and my child may obtain food together—if not, we will perish together.”

“ I will look into your case with pleasure,

madam, not only out of sympathy for your misfortunes, but from respect to my much lamented friend Mrs. Hunter, whose flattering opinion of me might, but for her premature death——But, dear me, what am I saying? Send me your papers, madam—I will consider them attentively; and if I find there is any hope, I will recommend you to a solicitor to conduct the cause. By the by," continued he, a sudden thought coming over him, "could you not take my young man with you to your residence, and let him bring whatever documents you may have in your possession; so that I may at once address myself to the question, and be enabled to advise you definitively to-morrow?"

Waddy's sudden civility may appear at first sight to be very unaccountable; but the fact is, that on reading Mrs. Hunter's letter a second time, and more especially on hearing the few words dropped by Mrs. Darcy touching a *will*, he saw there was a remote possibility of turning his new and, at first sight, unpromising client to account. Waddy never threw away a chance,

however improbable. No one was better aware than he of the “glorious uncertainty of the law” in general, and of that connected with wills in particular. He knew that it was all but impossible to frame a testament, so as to render the testator’s wishes free from the chance of perversion. He knew how easy it was to quibble on a word—to make the worse appear the better cause—to rouse a jury’s feelings, and to lull their common sense—especially if, as in the present case, he advocated the claims of an injured woman. All this was present at once to his mind; and, without caring a jot for Mrs. Darcy or for her distress, he resolved to investigate the question of the will. Did he purpose to content himself, in the event of success, with his fees?—or, did other suggestions thus early arise in his bosom? Time will shew.

Mrs. Darcy was hardly prepared for the change in Waddy’s tone towards her. Strangers as she and Hope were, she nevertheless ventured to draw a favourable omen from the lawyer’s

alacrity ; and felt convinced, that, at the worst, her case would receive careful attention. Resolved, therefore, to make the most of the favourable moment, she quickly consented to the plan proposed by Waddy, and said, with less of reserve in her manner than had until now been manifested,—

“ Do not disdain, sir, to accept a widow’s thanks for your generous zeal in her behalf. Any person whom you may send with me shall soon return, with such papers as may throw a light on the nature of the inheritance. I have brought a copy of the will with me,” she continued, handing it to Waddy. “ You will find, when you see the other documents, that the estate came into my father’s hands under certain restrictions, with remainder to next of kin, unless——But, as you will so soon see the papers, I think it quite superfluous to attempt any explanation of the matter ; though, were I so inclined,” (and here a faint smile played for one instant over the sorrow-stricken face of Mrs. Darcy,) “ I fear I should only confuse

the matter, which, I assure you, is too intricate for my comprehension."

Waddy's hopes brightened. An intricate will, with multifarious provisions, was the very thing for him. In proportion to the number of the clauses were the chances that some of them might be inconsistent with, if not destructive of, others.

"This card may turn up a trump," thought Waddy, with all the vulgar cunning of his heart. "Pray, my dear madam," said he, addressing Mrs. Darcy with his smoothest smile and utmost courtesy of speech, "give yourself no concern whatever in the case. These things, which so puzzle the fair, are cases of A, B, C to us professional men. Depend upon my utmost zeal in your behalf; and if Justice, contrary to what is said by unsuccessful litigants, has *not* left the earth, you shall see, dear madam, that——"

Here his eloquence was cut short by the clerk who figured at the commencement of the

chapter, and who, entering the room rather abruptly, said,—

“If you please, sir, Mr. Snap, the solicitor, has called to speak to you, on an important point connected with the case of *Silk versus Bilk*.”

“D—n Snap!” exclaimed the barrister, in a rage. “A thousand pardons, madam. Tell Mr. Snap I’m engaged, and can’t see him. Didn’t you know, sir,” added he, emphatically, to the clerk, “that I was engaged, and with a lady too?”

“I thought,” returned the clerk, who could not by any means understand the contrast between the present posture of circumstances and the style of Waddy’s first reception of Mrs. Darcy, “I thought, sir, you would see Mr. Snap, as the case comes on the day after to-morrow.”

“Then, sir,” retorted the barrister, “there’s plenty of time, without interrupting me now. Tell Mr. Snap that I cannot see him at present; nor shall I be able to give him an

interview before two o'clock to-morrow. I really, madam, have to apologize for this interruption," continued Waddy, as his clerk left the room, " but the fact is, I am so beset with solicitors, on professional business, that I can scarcely call my time my own. Pray, when shall I order my young man to attend you home?"

" I am quite ready to proceed immediately," replied Mrs. Darcy.

Waddy rang the bell. " Call a coach directly," said he to the porter, " and tell Mr. Jones to come here."

" I had rather walk," observed Mrs. Darcy, as a sense of her penniless condition came over her.

" By no means, madam," rejoined the barrister. " Excuse me a moment; I will just step out, and give instructions to the clerk. Jones," said he, when he had reached the outer office, " a coach will be here directly, in which you must accompany the lady, now in my room, to her home. You will have to bring thence

some papers for my inspection. Here is money to pay the coach. The lady resides somewhere in your neighbourhood."

"What, at Islington, sir?"

"Yes. And for which reason I want you to recommend her to your butcher, and baker, and grocer."

"Sir!"

"Even so; but it must be done with caution."

(The since ill treated and prostituted term "*tact*" was not then tacked on to the vernacular tongue.) "The fact is, I have some reason for wishing to make this lady comfortable, especially as she is suffering under a temporary want of funds. Now, could n't you get into a conversation with her on the way?"

"What's her name, sir?"

"Darcy.—Very right—quite material.—Well, you now know her name. Talk of the neighbourhood; extol the tradesmen who serve you; recommend her to deal with them; tell her they never pester for payment, or indeed ask for money till the end of the

year ; and then, Jones, privately refer them to me.”

“ Very well, sir,” replied the clerk. “ The man’s certainly mad !” he mentally ejaculated. “ But she ’s a beautiful woman, too.”

The coach was now announced ; the lady and the clerk entered it, and drove towards Islington.

CHAPTER III.

“ Governments are often intoxicated with imaginations of plots and treasonable practices.”

CLARENDON.

As Jones and the lady journeyed onwards, not a word was spoken by either party. The mind of Mrs. Darcy was busy in ruminating over her griefs, and in speculating as to the probable effects of Waddy's active agency in her behalf; for that it would be active, his earnest manner left her no room to doubt; and Mr. Jones was so fairly mystified by Waddy's sudden injunctions touching the matter of the butcher,

baker, &c. as to be unconscious almost of the presence of the lady who journeyed with him. They were, indeed, but indifferent companions ; but, though “sorrow is a sacred thing,” Mr. Jones would not have respected its claims to reverence, had he not been tongue-tied by his own astonishment at his master’s singular instructions.

At length they reached Mrs. Darcy’s house, situated in one of the by streets of the then village. The unwonted circumstance of a coach driving along the street, drew the neighbouring inhabitants to their windows, to see who it could be that thus approached ; and as the vehicle stopped at Mrs. Darcy’s door, the head of a man—a stranger, was thrust out of the parlour window.

The poor lady was seized with a sudden tremor ; and falling back in the carriage, exclaimed, “Good God ! for what purpose has that man taken possession of my room ? Surely nothing has happened to my child ?”

“Compose yourself, madam,” said Jones,

who recognized the man to be a Bow-street runner ; “ there is some mistake here, depend upon it, which, happily, I shall be able to set right. Keep your seat for a few moments in the coach while I speak to the man.”

Though thankful for the interference of Jones, Mrs. Darcy was not re-assured. She had, of late, been too subject to alarm and distress to regard without gloomy apprehension any thing which bore the least sinister appearance. She knew that Mr. Darcy had maintained a correspondence with a certain club of malcontents in Ireland, and she was fearful, so great was her nervous excitability, that his acts might have compromised his widow. Then, again, as her forebodings became more unreasonable, she even dreaded that the strange man she had a minute before seen looking out of her window might be the mysterious assassin of Darcy fiendishly pursuing herself to a like end. These terrors came over her during the absence of Mr. Jones in the house ; and, even in the depth of her dis-

tress, she thanked her stars that she was not quite bereft of aid and counsel.

Jones now returned to her with an ominous aspect; and, opening the door of the coach, merely said it was necessary that she should at once alight.

Mrs. Darcy's fears seemed to be confirmed; but in the bewilderment of her dismay, she permitted her companion to conduct her whither he chose. On entering her parlour, the poor lady was recalled to her situation by seeing her chest of drawers broken open and rummaged, and by hearing Mr. Jones say to the man in the room—

“ Recollect what I have said to you. This lady must be used with all delicacy possible. I tell you she is a friend of Mr. Waddy, the Barrister, and he 's not the man that will see her needlessly oppressed.”

“ Ay, ay,” growled the runner; “ do n't be afeerd. We knows how far we can go.”

“ For heaven's sake, sir,” exclaimed Mrs.

Darcy, addressing Jones, “ tell me what all this means.”

“ I am sorry, ma’am,” replied the clerk, “ to say, that the person before us is a Bow-street officer, and that he comes here with a search-warrant.”

“ A search-warrant!” echoed Mrs. Darcy : “ Am I suspected to be a thief? Of what may poverty not be accused?”

“ Nothing of that sort, ma’am,” replied the officer ; “ something of a more seriouser natur.”

“ Heavens! what does the man mean?”

“ Only a bit o’ treason, ma’am—can’t help it—must do my duty. Here, ma’am, you’d better cast your eye over that,” he continued, handing to the afflicted lady a warrant from the Home Office.

“ Well, sir,” said Mrs. Darcy, after she had perused the document; “ and to what extent do you conceive it necessary that your search should proceed?”

“ Why, ma’am, *must* take all the papers

I finds in the premises. If you likes, you and the gentleman can go with me up stairs. I've never no wish to be disagreeable by never no means. 'Tisn't in my natur ; but natur or no natur, ma'm, business is business, and bread's bread, earn it how you will : so you see, ma'am, it becomes my business to seize and seal all manner o' writings, and next— — ”

“ To seize myself,” interrupted Mrs. Darcy.

“ Not exactly seize you, ma'am ; but as a hofficer, ma'am, I 'm bound to take charge o' you, and take you at once to the hoffice.”

“ My child ! my child !” exclaimed Mrs. Darcy, in a frantic tone.

“ Lord love you, ma'am ! don't be afear'd about the child. We can take him with us, you know. Bless his little heart, he 's for all the world the very *moral* of my Bobby.”

During this short burst of sympathy on the part of this executive limb of the law, Mrs. Darcy had sunk into a chair, burying her face in her hands, and not only seeming unconscious of all around her, but being so in reality.

A trance similar to that into which Shakspeare (whose daring spirit of investigation carried him into the midst of all the fearful mysteries of the human heart) has thrown Othello, when his torture became too much for endurance, was now experienced by Mrs. Darcy. Her mind was a blank; but on its surface moved indistinct images of all that she was now suffering, and of all which she had formerly endured—ghastly presentments of “hostile *friends*,” murder, grinding poverty, imprisonment, scorn, a scaffold, and public execution! Such was the extravagance of her terror.

Alas! the persons who surrounded her were not calculated even to understand, much less to console, sufferings such as hers. Mr. Jones, indeed, once essayed, after his matter-of-fact manner, to comfort her; but his words, not calculated to reach her heart, fell unheeded on her ear. Not so the voice of the Man of Bow-Street, the sound of which at once recalled the unhappy lady to her senses.

“Come—come, ma’am; I can’t stop here all day. Besides, I’ve got other fish to fry. If you likes to get again into the coach at the door, why I’ve never no objection. Here’s the woman with the boy.—All’s ready now, ma’am. Come—come.”

Mrs. Darcy lifted up her head, glanced wildly at the officer, clasped her child in her arms, and, accompanied by Jones, re-entered the coach, a forlorn and despairing prisoner.

CHAPTER IV.

“ Where in all governments and times,
He had been both friend and foe to crimes ;
And used two equal ways of gaining ;
By hind’ring justice, or maintaining.”

HUDIBRAS.

MRS. DARCY and Jones had no sooner left the Temple, than Waddy, closing his study, and, so to speak, gathering up himself, began to bestow an attentive perusal on the copy of the will left him by Mrs. Darcy.

“ So far, so good,” said he to himself, as he finished the investigation ; “ if the other papers turn out as I think they will, I have now a better chance than ever of ‘ bettering my con-

dition,' as the spinsters say. How lucky it was that that termagant, Miss Tomlinson, gave herself such airs, just in the very nick of time. If I can recover Mrs. Darcy's fortune, she will be a prize worth two of that wiry old maid, with her ex-asperated H's. But mum's the word. I must keep every thing to myself. What a pity that I said a word about a solicitor —a second person must not be admitted in the management of this case. No, no ; every man for himself. I wish to heaven Jones would return with the other papers."

A tap was heard at the door. "Ah ! here he is. Come in, Jones !" exclaimed Waddy.

The door was now opened, and Waddy saw standing at the entrance, not Jones with the papers which were to ensure him an El Dorado, but Mr. Phelan O'Finn, bearing a letter of a very different description, though from a lady.

"Morrow, Counsellor ! Come to trouble you again, you see," said O'Finn, handing his credentials to the astonished lawyer.

“ ‘T is no use, Mr. O’Finn,” said Waddy, rejecting the proffered epistle. “ I’ve had quite enough of her.”

“ Of coarse, Counsellor, you do n’t mane to be ——”

“ I mean to be nothing, sir—I wouldn’t (but pray sit down, Mr. O’Finn, there can be no occasion to treat you inhospitably)—but I wouldn’t, upon my sacred word and honour, look at anything of hers for all the world. No, no—no more overtures.”

“ Oh! you may make your mind asy on that score, Counsellor; there’s nothing like an overture, I can tell you, in the contints of that letter—it’s another tune altogether.”

“ I care not what her tune is; but I know this, Mr. O’Finn, and you must see it yourself, it is impossible for me ever to harmonise with her vile, vacillating, and uncontrollable temper. I’ve had a lucky escape, and therefore, for heaven’s sake, let nothing tempt you to bring us together again.”

“ Open the letter, Counsellor, and see what she says.”

“ Impossible, sir—my mind is made up.”

“ So is mine, Counsellor.”

“ How so, sir?”

“ That I don’t leave the room, till you read the letter.”

O’Finn’s emphatic threat appeared to have the desired effect. Waddy took the folded epistle, which was sealed with Miss Tomlinson’s cypher.

“ These initials,” said he, looking at the seal, “ stand for a motto which, I promise you, Mr. O’Finn, I shall never assume. B. T. ‘ *be trepanned*,’—never, sir ; but, out of compliment to you, I shall read her letter.”

O’Finn bowed.

The letter ran as follows :

“ Sir,

“ After your abominable behaviour upon the most sacred and solemn occasion incidental to the fate of female——”

“ Ah ! I see,” said Waddy, “ your country-

woman has had a hand in this matter. These are some of her alliterative flights."

"Read on, Counsellor—remark is unsasonable just now. Time presses, and comment only creates delay."

"Delay, indeed, 't was a lucky delay for me," rejoined the barrister, proceeding with the perusal of the lady's letter.

"—— fate of female, I cannot possibly keep in my possession any token which could ever remind me of the most vile, vulgar, and mercenary of men :"

"Bravo ! This is quite in the *belle* letter style," commented the reader.

"—— and therefore I have instructed Mr. O'Finn to return to you your paltry trinket—the brooch you intended as a wedding gift ; and to request, nay, desire, that you in return will deliver up to him my miniature."

Here Waddy withdrew to his bureau, and, producing the miniature, presented it to O'Finn, saying, with emphasis, "There, sir, there is the copy of the most original termagant that ever

sought to become another Xantippe. Now, sir," he added, "have you any further demands on me or on my time? for time is as precious to me as it may be to you, Mr. O'Finn."

"None, Counsellor, on Miss Tomlinson's part."

"Then certainly," said Waddy, "you can have none on your own."

"Why not exactly *demands*, Counsellor; but I 've had a dale o' trouble in this troublesome business, and upon my conscience — — —"

"Conscience!" interrupted Waddy; "surely you have not the conscience to ask of me any thing more by way of fee. I have already rewarded you well; but so glad am I to be released from your client's fangs, that I now present you this ten pound note, upon the express condition that you never again *trouble* yourself on my account."

The note was pocketed; and O'Finn wishing the Counsellor everything he could desire in life, departed the Temple, thinking that

the little crooked-eyed lawyer was an “ill *throrated* man.”

Jones at length returned; but here a new trouble awaited the barrister, who had to learn that of which the reader is already possessed, namely, the seizure of the lady and her papers. Whatever might be Waddy’s failings, want of promptitude was not among the number. To hear the news and to start for the police office, whither Mrs. Darcy was to be conveyed, did not occupy five minutes; and, indeed, she had hardly arrived there before Waddy was on the spot, and prepared for action.

The case being entered upon, the barrister arose, and, addressing the magistrate, declared that he appeared on the part of Mrs. Darcy.

“I understand,” he said, “that a special form of search-warrant has been granted against this unfortunate, but highly respectable lady; and that under pretence of her being engaged in treasonable practices, her papers have been seized, and she herself taken into custody. A more absurd suspicion was

never engendered even in the minds of those persons who now, for the sins of the nation, are permitted to administer the affairs of his Majesty's government. A knot of statesmen, in whose councils despotism and timidity—cunning and folly—rashness and procrastination go hand in hand ; and whose deplorable ignorance of true policy and of human nature ——”

“ I cannot sit here, and suffer you to go on in this strain, Mr. Waddy,” interrupted the magistrate ; “ and further let me remind you, that to abuse the ministers will not serve the cause of your client.”

“ Look at that lady,” resumed Waddy, without noticing, or even appearing to have heard, his worship's remonstrance ; “ look at that lady, I repeat, with her helpless child in her arms, and then say whether *she* is a person likely to be engaged in treasonable correspondence. Her mind has been engrossed wholly by the care of her infant ; and, I should think,” continued he, with a slight chuckle, “ that it

would be difficult even for the preposterous ingenuity of our sage rulers to make any thing treasonable out of the intercourse between a fond mother and the child in her arms. A notable proceeding truly, to break open a defenceless lady's drawers, and to drag out to the vulgar gaze, and, for aught I know, to the indecent merriment of curious officials, the letters written to her by her late husband in the confidence of early love—sacred epistles which every man of honour would hold in inviolable respect. See how your victim weeps! Is this the way justice is to be administered in this vaunted land of liberty? Who are the accusers of my client? I demand to see the affidavit whereon the warrant was granted; and I demand, moreover ——— ”

“This, sir, is not language fit for you to utter, nor for me to hear,” again interposed the magistrate. “I can have no objection to see you warm in behalf of your client, but I must insist that proper respect be paid to the Bench. You ought to know, Mr. Waddy, that

our course admits of no deviation. Why do you talk to me as if I had any other concern in the case than such as is dictated by my public duty?—I will not hear you unless you change your tone.”

“ I care very little whether you hear me or not,” responded the barrister, looking around for admiration.

“ Mr. Waddy,” said his worship, with magisterial dignity, “ you forget not only what is due to me, but what is due to yourself; and, if you persist in this strain I shall enforce my authority, and compel you to be silent.”

“ Then I know my course,” responded the barrister. “ I am not the man to be thus foiled,” he added, giving a significant glance, meant for Mrs. Darcy (in whose eyes he was anxious to appear a hero), but which said glance fell short of its object, and seemed to rest on the red nose and burley countenance of one of the runners.

But had the barrister been a better ocular shot than he was, his look would have

been unperceived by Mrs. Darcy, whose eyes were riveted, as by the fascination of a serpent, on a man standing among the other spectators, and who seemed to regard with eager scrutiny the investigation as it proceeded. — In person he was tall and spare; his face was pale, and if it bore evidence of the ravages of mental trouble, it was plain that such arose more from the stings of a reproachful conscience, than from any misfortune deserving honest sympathy. His brows were constantly knit, as if by an effort to suppress some tormenting thought; and there was a restless and suspicious motion in his eyes betokening a perpetual dread of observance.

Not for an instant did he direct even a furtive glance towards Mrs. Darcy. Perhaps he was so conscious that her eyes were fixed on him, as to render him unable to encounter her gaze. Be this as it may, the lady seemed absorbed in contemplating his appearance in that place of justice. Suddenly, she turned towards the Bench, exclaiming,

“ If the man I see there,” pointing towards the individual just described, “ is the person on whose testimony I am dragged hither — ”

“ Madam,” interrupted Waddy, “ pray do not be tempted to say a single syllable. *I* will see you righted.”

“ You are very properly cautioned,” observed the magistrate. “ As you have the benefit of counsel, it must surely be your best policy to leave your case entirely in his hands.”

The lady, though with evident reluctance, made a sign of acquiescence.

“ Go on, Mr. Waddy,” resumed his worship, good humouredly: “ you have heard my decision as to the style of your advocacy.”

“ Of what specific offence is my client accused?” enquired the barrister. “ Let us be clear upon that point; and then, but not till then, will I consent to an investigation of her papers;—but I warn you not to invade the liberty of the subject by a needless and impertinent investigation of private matters.—If the

Shylock policy is to be pursued," continued Waddy, thrusting his hands into his breeches pockets, raising himself on tiptoe, and drawing his little frame into a perpendicular attitude, as if making up his body to appear conclusive no less than his words, "mind that you merely take your pound of flesh, but beware of shedding one drop of blood in the excision. To speak without metaphor, let me admonish you that, in the prosecution of your public duty, you do not infringe on private rights. I therefore request that the inspection of the papers may take place in your private room, whither I am ready to attend your worship."

This proposal was acquiesced in by the magistrate. The papers, on being inspected, proved to be, with the exception of one enigmatical epistle dated from Ireland, with the initials U. I. M. and containing some ambiguous expressions, letters of affection, and documents connected with the inheritance of certain property.

“ Now,” exclaimed Waddy, triumphantly, “ I think my client, this oppressed lady, is free from suspicion.”

“ I heartily concur in that opinion, Mr. Waddy,” said his worship ; “ she may leave this office without the slightest imputation on her character as a loyal subject. But you know we cannot, in these times, when the revolutionary spirit is abroad, be too cautious.”

“ Nonsense !” murmured Waddy, inaudibly. “ Where are the papers ?”

“ Here, sir,” replied the magistrates’ clerk, handing them to the barrister, who deliberately placed them in his pocket.

“ Now, my dear madam, I have the unfeigned pleasure of restoring you to that liberty of which you ought not, for a moment, to have been deprived. My carriage” (’twas only a jarvey) “ will convey you home, and to-morrow I shall have the honour to wait on you in reference to the *other* business.”

These last words did not fall unheeded on the ear of the stranger, towards whom Mrs.

Darcy had attracted the notice both of Waddy and of the bench. The man stole silently away, and Mrs. Darcy watched his retiring footsteps with an expression almost of terror. When he had disappeared, she seemed to breathe with renewed life, and was able to listen to the few words which Waddy continued to address to her.

“Who is that fellow?—and why does he so alarm you?” enquired the barrister.

“I cannot tell you now. Let me go home and sleep, if I can. My child—my poor child!” she exclaimed, pressing the boy to her bosom, as Waddy handed her to the coach, and consigned her again to the care of Jones.

CHAPTER V.

“ Revenge, the ruffian’s cowardice.”

SIR W. DAVENANT.

“ Look to thyself, thou art in jeopardy.”

KING JOHN.

As Waddy had ordered the coachman to convey Mrs. Darcy home, and as the distance between Bow Street and the Temple was but short, the barrister resolved to walk to his chambers. In passing along the north side of Russell Street, his attention was attracted by the figure of the unknown intruder in the police-office, standing, or rather lurking at the corner of Crown Court, as if waiting for

some one. There was something remarkable in the appearance of the stranger, no less than in his conduct at the police-office ; and although the twilight of the November evening was fast deepening into darkness, Waddy took such a glance at the man as might enable him to know him again, should such recognition be ever necessary.

Our lawyer, eager to arrive at home that he might betake himself to the perusal of Mrs. Darcy's papers, soon reached Wych Street, which in those *non-Olympic* days presented but a dimly-lighted and rather by-road to the town wayfarer. The long dead walls of the Inns of Court, which line both sides of the middle of the street, and the projecting upper-parts of the houses, imparted at once gloom and quaintness to the scene.

“ O may thy virtue guard thee thro’ the roads
Of Drury’s mazy courts and dark abodes *.”

The then favourite passage towards Temple Bar from the west was through Holywell

* Gay’s “ *Trivia.*”

Street, in consequence of its numerous shops, which furnished amusement by the way, and in the evening gave light to the passengers from the candles in the windows. These were more powerful than the miserable, faint and flickering gleams derived from the public lamps; and accordingly Wych Street in its comparative darkness and solitude presented rather a cut-throat sort of aspect.

It was not until he gained the middle of the street, that Waddy's notice was attracted to the footsteps of two persons, who evidently seemed to regulate their pace by his own. Though this did not excite any suspicion on his part, it nevertheless aroused his curiosity, prompted by which, he turned suddenly round, and, by the lamp-light, saw distinctly the man who had figured in the police office, and who was now accompanied by a shabby-looking fellow, with whom he appeared in earnest conversation. On perceiving that he was noticed, the former of the companions separated from the other, and darted up the gateway of New Inn; when Waddy, beginning to fear that the remaining

fellow was dodging him (a circumstance which in these days of well-regulated police would amount to nothing, but which was then rather a formidable affair) debated in his own mind how he should get rid of his pursuer.

“Perhaps he wants to track me to my chambers,” thought Waddy, “and so worry me with a long story about some friend of his waiting for trial in Newgate ; he shall do no such thing. At any rate I’ll lead him a little roud-about, and then if he continues to follow me, I shall begin to think he harbours no good design, and shall feel justified in consigning him to the parental care of those reverend gentlemen ‘the watch.’”

With this view, Waddy on arriving at that labyrinth of old houses close to St. Clement’s Church, on the site of which Picket Street now stands, moved abruptly up the dark avenue leading to Old Boswell Court, and pursued the sinuosities of that close neighbourhood, till he arrived at old Shire Lane, intending to turn to the right, and so reach Fleet Street close to the eastern side of Temple Bar.

But as Cassius says,

“ Ere he could attain the point proposed,”

and while he was still immersed in the intricacies of the spot into which he had incautiously diverged, the fellow who had stealthily dogged him, closed with him just at the turning of a corner, and with a short bludgeon aimed a blow at his head, which, had it taken effect, would have disqualified the barrister either for visiting Mrs. Darcy on the morrow, or for even inspecting her papers.

But Waddy's good genius interposed to save him just at the critical moment. The ruffian, though he suspected it not, had himself been tracked by one who knew him well, and who knew also that his movements in that place portended evil to some one. At the moment that his arm was uplifted to strike, a sudden push from behind gave an unexpected direction to the blow, and the weapon fell with a violent crash against the window of an empty house, breaking the frame-work, and smashing several of the panes. Waddy, though unhurt, reeled

with dismay, and the fellow turning round to ascertain who had thwarted his purpose, beheld a young girl, whose pale and squalid face was lighted up by the almost savage glare of her eyes, as she looked indignantly at him.

“ What, Bet ! ” exclaimed the ruffian,—“ this is your work, is it ? —I ’m d—d but you shall repent this infernal meddling o ’ yours.”

“ Repent ! —I ’ve repented enough already,” replied the girl: “ it isn ’t in your power, you villain, to give me more cause for shame. Mind what I say, Jack Bobson,—it ’s no use your trying to throw me off—I ’ll stick to you for ever; and if I don ’t——but never mind. What ! going to strike me, are you ? —Do so, if you like, and prove yourself a coward like other bullies. D ’ye think I fear ye ? —Not I.”

Waddy by this time had recovered some portion of his senses, and began to roar lustily for the watch, not perceiving, so great had been his panic, that he was standing alone in that wretched alley. His assailant and deliverer had disappeared. On a sudden two or three

rattles were sprung, and their startling sound, instead of re-assuring the barrister, added only to his dismay.

Had such an accident occurred in the present day, effective assistance would have been at hand in a moment without noise, thanks to Sir Robert Peel's most admirable police; but in those times notice was given by the watchmen's rattles for rogues to escape, and when the guardians of the night thought all was clear, and that nothing was left for them to encounter, they made their appearance on the scene of action. Accordingly, after Waddy's ears had been thoroughly distracted by the jarring noise of the rattles, two or three elderly gentlemen in woollen night caps and great-coats, and bearing lanterns, gradually appeared. These worthies, finding the barrister standing alone in that suspicious neighbourhood, closed around him.

“O, ho! this is your pranks is it, my fine feller?” said the nearest ‘charley,’ seizing Waddy by the collar of the coat. “You’re a nice chap indeed!”

“Unhand me, you rude ruffian!” ejaculated the little lawyer, struggling to extricate himself from the watchman’s grasp.

“Come, come, old chap, keep a civil tongue in yer head, or mayhap ye may carry away wi’ ye more nor ye can clap in yer craw.”

An additional force now fell upon the unfortunate Waddy.

“You cowardly scoundrels, for what do you take me?”

“Oh! we knows well enough; and what’s more, we knows *where* to take ye, too. What d’ye think o’ that, Mr. Winder-breaker?”

“I tell ye, I’m a gentleman.”

“Ah, that gammon wont do.”

“I’m a barrister—a barrister at law.”

“Barristers at lor knows the lor better nor to be smashing windows and racketing and riotin’ in places sich as this.”

“Ruffians! I’ll make you pay for this, I promise you. ’Tis vagabonds such as you, that break, instead of preserve the peace.”

“I’m blest if it isn’t always the case,” said

the least valiant and loudest of Waddy's oppressors—"always, always yer little undersized chaps as has the most lip."

"Ay, and always the most unruliest too," said a second, clapping an additional claw upon the barrister's collar.

"See here, Mister Blue-bag," said a third, thrusting his lantern in Waddy's face—"see here, the more quieter ye takes it the better for yerself, for if ye doesn't walk peaceably and soberly down to the watchhouse, I'm blowed if we doesn't drag you by the bobtail through the mud and mire."

Perceiving that his pleading was of no avail, and that further resistance was fruitless, the barrister allowed himself to be borne to the watch-house, where he was placed in safe custody.

J. B. NICHOLS AND SON, 25, PARLIAMENT STREET.

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